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FOR SECOND READING
ATTEMPTS TO PLEASE
By STEPHEN GWYNN

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PREFATORY.

PUTTING together a volume of reprints is the simplest matter in the world; trouble begins only when you look for a title which shall be suitably descriptive. The choice might be easier if (as knowledgeable persons recommend) I had assembled sketches and studies with a reference in all to some vague caption —The Country, for instance, or The Town. Frankly, I dislike such groupings. A volume of essays is not a structure but a collection, and need pretend to no unity but such as is reflected from the varying moods and preoccupations of one mind. Lamb's was the ideal title; “The Essays of Elia” is simple, is memorable, and perfectly describes the book. None of us, however, dare imitate that simplicity, and Lamb himself would not have ventured it without the screen of a pseudonym. Let me plead that my choice is candid and is modest, since it plainly warns my contingent patron, the not impossible purchaser, that what he is invited to buy is not new to print.

Moreover, “For Second Reading” is a handy label. If liberty, perhaps amounting to perversion, has been taken with a parliamentary phrase, may not the transference be justified? Publication in a periodical is, like a bill's first reading, little more than an introduction to the arena; when you come up (in volume form) for the second reading, an important stage is reached; but no bill and no book

is even on the way to permanent recognition until the ordeal of a third reading is passed—and few they be that pass it.—I do wrong, however, to forestal these quips, which might have been convenient for reviewers.

In adding as a sub-title, “Attempts to Please,” I have sought to divest myself of damaging associations. Every essay is an attempt at something (this prefatory essay is an attempt at self-justification), and for a good many years my miscellaneous writings fell largely under the headings of attempts to convert and attempts to annoy, of which the latter were the more successful, though perhaps I was never so annoying as when most anxious to convert. It seems, therefore, prudent to give assurance on the threshold that nothing here is parliamentary, except the title: there will be found merely descriptions of scenes and hours which these pages help me to remember with enjoyment, and thoughts about books and other subjects that still may interest the sympathetic reader. The most sympathetic reader of any essay is the author himself when he has thoroughly forgotten what he originally wrote, and I can claim that critic’s imprimatur for all I have included.

In the arrangement, some balance is attempted between indoor and outdoor themes; with allowance made for this, the papers stand in sequence as they were written, during a period of some three and twenty years, beginning with the spring which followed the snowbound Christmas of 1894.

My acknowledgments are due to the proprietors

of the "Cornhill," "Saturday Review," "Spectator," "Outlook," "Daily News," "Daily Chronicle," "Daily Mail," "Pall Mall Gazette," "Westminster Gazette," and "Freeman's Journal"; and to the memory of "Macmillan's Magazine," "Literature," and "The Pilot"—in which magazines and journals these essays were kindly given their first reading.

S. G.

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FOR SECOND READING

LAMBING-TIME

(1895).

"SAVEZ-VOUS où gîte Mai, ce joli mois?" I often wondered where Stevenson unearthed that haunting, delicious refrain. Yet even May's advent is hardly so enchanting as the days that March borrows of April, the Eden time of lambs; and they were ten times sweeter than ever after this frost-bound season, when the snow lay visible on the Dublin hills till Easter Sunday. A most inclement spring it was; but the first fortnight of March tempered its bitterness to the ewes that were yearning in every field; and I, back in the country for the first time since my boyhood, felt daily swelling and strengthening in me the aboriginal instinct that connects itself with the occupation of land; there grew upon me the desire and delight of seeing increase of the ground, increase of beasts, till I began to wonder how I had ever contented myself to be a dweller in cities. However, a day came when March returned to his cruelty, bringing a bitter, sleety wind. Late in the afternoon I went to visit the farmer who neighbours us. Twilight was falling, and the sheep were being driven in with the lambs; the yard was a pool of mud, every rut beaten level, and the whole diapered over by small, sharp feet. It had been a

hard day for the household ; they had been up hours before daylight, tending ewes that were dropping their young in the cold ; a few lambs had been lost, and the house was full, they said, of others that needed warmth and care. They led the way into the kitchen, a low, smoke-blackened room : nothing was visible except the fire and a long table, from under which a sheep-dog growled, but faint bleatings seemed to come from every corner. A candle was lighted, and showed a kind of pen near the chimney-nook, and in it, piled one on top of the other, eight or ten lambs, scarcely able to stand. Sheep are good mothers enough, but when twins arrive they are apt to disown the first-comer ; these were foundlings whose dams could by no persuasion be induced to recognise them. Some of them are bottle-fed like babies, and I was looking at the simple apparatus—a common medicine bottle with a roughly-drilled stopper of wood projecting, which is forced into the nursling's mouth—when suddenly there broke out a perfect storm of “baas” from one of the bedrooms ; some one opened the door, and in bounced a splendid lusty lamb. “Surely that one's not hand-reared,” I said. “Not at all, we have him on a foster mother” ; and the farmer's wife went to the door and gave a call. An immense goat walked in, with huge horns and preposterous udder. One of the lads took her by the horns. “Wait till you see him at her,” they said ; and, upon my word, it seemed a serious matter for the goat ; such punching and pulling, and such rapturous wagging of the tail made one realise that maternal

duties were a serious business for the deputy. However, this goat was furnishing four lambs with sustenance; and thereupon her mistress went off into a eulogy upon the virtues of the race; how they tended themselves; and how this one was so petted, it would come upstairs in the morning to stir her out of bed. Then she went across to the pen and tumbled over the heap of little woolly beasts, till at the bottom she disclosed a beautiful creature, clearest black and clearest white, infinitely more graceful and active than the lambs. "There," she said, "take that home to your children for a toy; I do be often looking at them playing about." I took it gratefully, and went off murmuring to myself Virgil's praise of the less regarded flock:—"Theirs the most numerous offspring, theirs the bounteous yield of milk; the more you drain them in the morning, the higher will the milk-pail froth at night; yet their pasturage is woodland and mountain-top, their food the rough bramble and cliff-clinging shrubs; of themselves they return punctually to the homestead, bringing their young, and the heavy udder can scarce drag across the threshold." Meanwhile the kid, taking any human being for a mother, followed at my heel like a puppy, but skipping as only a kid can skip. Poor little martyr of a theological prejudice, people disdain your beautiful emerald eyes! And all the while, with Virgil's lines, there ran in my head the good wife's last words: "Well, you're on the land now, and you'll soon grow into it." That is the best commentary on the Georgics I ever heard.

PROVERBS DEMORALISED.

EVERY proverb is a worn-out epigram. At some period in the world's history some individual, more happily sententious than his neighbours, put into compact and telling form the vague utterances of humanity upon some department of common experience. He said the right thing at the right moment to the right people, and so his word became a proverb; for one has only to review the series of maxims to be convinced that it is chiefly luck which has exalted them to their position on the top line of copy-books. Nine-tenths of them have no very wonderful felicity of thought or diction; but there they are, established as authorities, with a practical influence upon life and conduct. The man in George Eliot's novel who quoted "Heaven helps them that help themselves" as the wisest saying in the Bible showed an ignorance of the Scriptures, it is true, but there was nothing unusual in his attribution of a divine origin to the old aphorism. Proverbs are treated, not as the sentiment of an individual, nor even as expressing the collective experience of a race, but as principles somehow superhuman in their wisdom. With a great many minds, especially among farmers and bucolic people generally, the most persuasive of all theoretic arguments is to produce a proverb bearing on the case in point. It would be almost safer to question the verbal inspira-

tion of the Pentateuch than to suggest that some quite ordinary personage first hit upon the saying that "A stitch in time saves nine." Yet somebody must have invented this proverb and every other proverb; they keep under the friction of countless repetitions some lineaments of a human accent. It was undoubtedly a woman who made this her motto; probably a buxom, bustling, good-humoured lady of five-and-forty, or, by 'r lakin, nearer fifty. "All is not gold that glitters" is not less plainly the wry-faced comment of some old curmudgeon like Sir Walter Besant's Ready Money Mortiboy. "Better late than never" calls up the genial vision of a stout tradesman, incorrigibly beaming. But, after all, how little sense there is left now in these old formulæ! Like razors, they have been ground and ground on the stone till the edge is worn clean away, and nothing is left but a stupid lump of material, only fit to be thrown into the melting-pot and forged to new uses. The old proverbs were, no doubt, once upon a time, moral principles; nowadays they are moral platitudes, the blunt weapons which stupidity uses to justify itself. Obviously the kindest thing to do is to recast them, or even to demoralise them, so that they may once more arrest the attention of intelligent people.

It is really a very easy and not at all an unprofitable process. Take those which have been quoted. "All that glitters is not gold" was, no doubt, in its early days a necessary warning. But the stupid people—for it is the stupid people who like to have their philosophy made up to them, so to say, in

easily portable doses—adopted the utterance, and laid to their souls the flattering unction that, since whatever glittered was not necessarily gold, therefore whatever showed conspicuous dulness had a good chance of being the genuine metal. “All is not gold that cannot glitter” is a desirable correction to popular opinion on the matter, though it must be allowed that this has not the simplicity of a proverb. But “Better late than never” ought at once to be superseded; “Better never than late” is far sounder philosophy. Suppose, for instance, that you remember a dinner engagement a quarter of an hour after the time appointed. Will you come in with the fish? or is it not better to sit down and invent the harmless, necessary lie? Even take the case of payment of a debt. You have borrowed anything from half-a-crown to five pounds, and the inexorable nature of things has prevented you from refunding it. If after the expiration of years you find yourself in a position to do so, would the sage counsel such a course? To pay would be a damaging admission of temporary embarrassments. Not to pay shows a fine obliviousness and a disregard of petty sums. Distinctly the sage would answer “Better never than late.” The saying that “A stitch in time saves nine” admits neither of inversion nor conversion; it is irrefragably orthodox, but suggests the companion proverb, which gives it the lie by implication, “It is never too late to mend.” About that hasty generalisation science has a word to say. Any student of heredity will tell you that notoriously a great part of mankind are never in a position to mend

at all, unless it be stockings—and these badly. As science puts the case, in its own picturesque dialect, 3·7 per cent. of us are foredoomed to incorrigibility. But there is always time to mend the proverb and transform it into a profound aphorism. “It is always too soon to mend”: who that has reached the age of five-and-twenty does not recognise the truth of that? To-morrow; next week; when I am married; when my ship comes home; when temptation ceases to tempt; that is the prescribed period of human reformation; and humanity goes on saying to itself: “It is never too late; certainly I will mend my ways—on the advent of the Greek Kalends.” The new version would at least recognise facts, instead of making a candlestick to carry “*an ignis fatuus* which bewitches, to lure men into holes and ditches.”

Even the less moral practitioners of proverb-making need occasional revision. La Rochefoucauld, for instance, made the remark that virtue is only vice in disguise. But we have only to read any sentimental French novelist, from Victor Hugo downwards, to be assured with every artifice of rhetoric that vice is only virtue a little under a cloud. A man steals: it is the imperious paternal instinct (or filial, as the case may be), which urges him to rescue his nearest and dearest from the hardships imposed upon them by an ill-constituted society. Hypocrisy may be the homage that vice pays to virtue; but it is equally true that eminently virtuous gentlemen often take a deal of trouble (mostly unavailing) that they may be accounted sad dogs. Becky Sharp remarked, in a moralising moment, that it was very

easy to be virtuous on four thousand a year. She might with greater accuracy have observed that it is very difficult for a family to be anything else on four hundred. These utterances, however, are epigrams which have not acquired the currency of proverbs: it is chiefly for a new edition of proverbs that one would clamour. For instance, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip" conveys no valuable information to anybody; but if you say "There is many a cup between the first slip and delirium tremens," it is a message of comfort to mankind. "Procrastination is the thief of time" has a sonorous ring about it, but means nothing; it is a good example of the origin of proverbs. Who was the Rev. Dr. Young that he should dictate to the world *ex cathedra*? If, however, you say that procrastination steals time in order to gain opportunities, you enunciate the guiding principle of diplomacy. It would be tedious to go on. One may, however, suggest that, if heaven helps those who help themselves, those who help themselves save Providence a deal of trouble. Too much space would be required to show up the demonstrably false proverbs such as "Necessity is the mother of invention." The true reading would be "luxury," not necessity; invention is only prevalent in an advanced and highly complicated state of civilisation.

CLARENCE MANGAN.

THAT quality in literature, undefinable but recognisable, which we call genius, is a thing so rare and beautiful that in a true miser's spirit we murmur at nature's arrogant wastefulness. With the accumulation of many ages heaped up for us, what matters one poet more or less? What does it signify that Coleridge wrote only one perfect poem and left "*Christabel*" and "*Kubla Khan*" unfinished? Yet we repine, though nature knows her business, and who is to say that a Coleridge without that tremulous sensibility, a Coleridge with the weak fibres strengthened, would have been anything more than a convincing preacher, a less vague metaphysician, possibly a leader of debate? There are points of resemblance between Coleridge and Mr. Gladstone, and one Mr. Gladstone is enough for a century. At all events, it appears certain that the genius of Coleridge lacked no external condition for free development. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, and probably Eton could have done no more for him; and his nature took kindly to the studies. He was born at precisely the lucky moment; no one who reads Coleridge's early work can fail to see that thirty years earlier Coleridge would have been simply the greatest imitator of Pope. The stronger spirit of Wordsworth and the more original culture of Lamb directed his genius,

as Hunt and Rossetti directed Millais. All that could be done for Coleridge, or with Coleridge, was done; and no human being ever had more reason to speak well of humanity. The record of his life makes sad reading, but arouses no sense of injustice. Very different is the case when one sees this quality of genius thrown like a rare seed into a soil where everything is hostile to its development—where, if it grows at all, it can produce only warped and abortive blossoms, barely distinguishable from weeds. Such was the case of Clarence Mangan, the man who is to Irish poetry what Coleridge is to English. He was like Coleridge in the fact that his best work detaches itself clearly from the rest; like Coleridge in a singular power of making from words strange melodies; above all, like Coleridge in his unhappy failings, but sadly unlike him in his opportunities.

James Mangan—for Clarence was merely a literary signature adopted in the *Dublin University Magazine*—was the son of a petty grocer. He received a curtailed education at some nameless school in the purlieus of Dublin and became a scrivener. In his leisure he taught himself three or four European languages. His father went bankrupt, and the family had to be kept by the son. His employment ceased early, and there is a gap in the very scanty records of his life. Love troubles and drink seem to have filled it, but as to cause and effect one can only conjecture. At all events, by 1830 Mangan was known to a small circle as a writer of verse, who contributed to inferior Dublin papers translations from the Ger-

man ; to a still smaller circle he was known by sight as a seedy-looking creature, prematurely aged, wrecked by opium and brandy. Dr. Todd, then Librarian of Trinity College, found him work in the library, where John Mitchel describes a first sight of him, perched on the top of a ladder. " He was an unearthly and ghostly figure in a brown garment ; the same garment (to all appearance) which lasted till the day of his death. The blanched hair was totally unkempt ; the corpse-like features still as marble. A large book was in his arms, and all his soul was in the book." Later came his connection with the *Dublin University Magazine*, where he continued to publish as translations what were really paraphrases from the German and Irish, and verses professedly from the Coptic or from Hafiz, which were Mangan unalloyed. In 1842 he joined the brilliant group of journalists who gathered round Gavan Duffy on the *Nation*, and whose purpose was to create a national literature that should be a driving power in politics. But politics, and above all revolutionary politics, generate pamphlets, not literature. Davis, O'Hagan, Duffy and the rest produced work perhaps as good at its best as Macaulay's ballads—rhetorical, striking and immediately effective. Mangan, destitute of any proper education, was plunged into this journalistic turmoil, this mob of rapid workers who produced on Thursday what should convulse the country on Saturday and be remembered till the next Saturday brought something more fire-new, hotter with the passion of the moment. And it was part of the propaganda to

revolt against English literature, to appeal to no public but the Irish, to study no models but those that were not English. Shelley, the spirit of revolt, was deified, no doubt; and a worse model than Shelley for the undisciplined intelligence it is hard to picture. Yet such existed. Moore, with his deadly facility, his sugar-plum sweetness, had certain qualities of his own really admirable; Tennyson's lyrics in the "Princess" show how a great artist in metre followed and bettered Moore's instruction. But for the half-educated writer, Moore's double rhymes, "beaming" and "gleaming," "keenly, serenely," "glancing" and "prancing" had a fatal attraction; the trick was so easy and so popular. Mangan, like the rest of his contemporaries, imitated bad models; but Mangan, being a man of genius also, discovered now and then for himself a more excellent way.

He knew no Irish; yet no poem written by any Irishman has rendered so well in English the Celtic manner as his "Dark Rosaleen."

Over hills and through dales
Have I roamed for your sake;
All yesterday I sailed with sails
On river and on lake.

The Erne . . . at its highest flood
I dashed across unseen,
For there was lightning in my blood,
 My dark Rosaleen,
 My own Rosaleen;
Oh! there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lightened through my blood,
 My dark Rosaleen!

Once and again in his other versions he catches a

curious magic of sound, as in the refrain, "Where, O Kinkora?" or in the strange ending of "The Saw Mill":

*I heard four planks
Fall down with a hollow echo.*

There is a more obvious, but taking, rhythm in his "Time of the Barmecides."

Then Youth was mine and a fierce wild will,
And an iron arm in war,
And a fleet foot high upon Ishkar's Hill
When the watchlights glimmered afar,
And a barb as fiery as any I know
That Khoord or Beddaween rides,
Ere my friends lay low—long, long ago,
In the time of the Barmecides.

And there are two things, but two only, which approach the "Dark Rosaleen," each in its way sinister enough. The first is a terrible description of Siberia in short serried lines. It is a pity to mutilate, but one may quote the central climax:

In Siberia's wastes
Are sands and rocks.
Nothing blooms of green and soft
But the snowpeaks rise aloft
And the gaunt ice blocks.

And the exile there
Is one with those;
They are part and he is part
For the sands are in his heart
And the killing snows.

*Therefore in those wastes
None curse the Czar.*

That may be rhetoric, but it is desperately effective, with its unexpectedness; it takes away the breath.

Last of all is the poem which he calls "The Nameless One"—unhappily only too easy to name.

Roll forth my song, like the rushing river
 That sweeps along to the mighty sea ;
 God will inspire me, while I deliver
 My soul of thee.

And deliver his soul he does, of boyish aspirations,
 the dreariness of his boyhood, and its one resource :

And tell how trampled, derided, hated,
 And worn by weakness, disease and wrong,
 He fled for shelter to God, who mated
 His soul with song.

So the song goes on, speaking its own sorrow :

And he fell far through the pit abysmal,
 The gulf and grave of Maginn and Burns,
 And pawned his soul for the devil's dismal
 Stock of returns.

But yet redeemed it in days of darkness,
 And shapes and signs of the final wrath
 When death in hideous and ghastly starkness
 Stood in his path.

Him grant a grave to, ye pitying noble,
 Deep in your bosoms. There let him dwell !
 He, too, had tears for all souls in trouble,
 Here and in hell.

The last scene of Mangan's life was typical of all. He lay in hospital, and the doctor who attended him observed him scrawl surreptitiously on any scraps of paper he could find and hide them under his pillow. Arrangements were made to furnish the dying poet with materials by putting wrappers round bottles and other odds and ends; direct comment

would have stopped the writing. At last the end came. The doctor asked eagerly for the papers. "There were no papers," said the nurse, "only a litter of old rubbish I just threw into the fire." The world can spare not these only, but all the things that Mangan, under happier circumstances might have written. Yet, what a pity.

THE MODERN PARENT.

IN the old times it was taken for granted in literature, and presumably also in life, that children were under a considerable obligation to their parents for the fact of existence. Many affecting appeals in drama from father to child resolve themselves into the inquiry : " But for me, where would you have been ? " and its corollary : " Since you owe everything to me, is it not reasonable that you should display your gratitude by doing what I ask of you ? " There was a fine appearance of logic in the plea, though I cannot recollect that it was ever successful. Still, the whole scheme of filial duty was based originally on the belief that it was very good of parents to bring their children into the world ; and it dates back to an age when people married explicitly in order to have children, and when every man owed it to his family not to die without lineage. Gradually, however, that change came to pass which makes the dividing line between the modern world and the ancient—the change in the relations between man and woman. The unit of society was no longer the family, but the individual, who sought his own good and his own completion, irrespective of his family connections. The bride assumed a new importance, a value in her own right, since man no longer demanded in marriage a woman, but *this* woman ; and, as romanticism strengthened, the thought of

issue in marriage receded further and further into the background. And so it has gone on. Shakespeare in the Sonnets utters his magnificent laudation of the "marriage of true minds"; but you also find him insisting on the notion that "of fairest creatures we desire increase." In Browning, who is your typical modern love-poet, the man thinks of nothing in heaven or earth but the woman, the woman of nothing but the man. And, to come down to prose, I would assert boldly that those who marry to please themselves—which is upon the whole the usual proceeding—desire simply the society of a certain person, with whom to live out life, and accept the consequences, with or without enthusiasm. We do not feel that in bringing infants into the world we are fulfilling a sacred duty; we are inclined, perhaps, to look upon them as the inevitable outcome of an arrangement which our lives demand. What is more, our neighbours are inclined to take the same view of the matter. We know exactly the area of the world's surface, and the statistics of population terrify us; we all realise how few places there are and how many seek them; and by a natural consequence—at all events in pre-war days—we deprecated rather than rejoiced in what Tennyson called "the torrent of babies."

Still, there was always the old argument to fall back on: if we did good to no one else, at least our children would thank us for the original benefit of existence; and till this century the argument was never challenged. Oedipus, Job, or, Swift, the famous unhappy, might curse the day when they

were born, but mankind regarded their utterance as a startling paradox, a final proof of their exceptional infelicity. Now, pessimism has gradually pervaded the air; and though men and women cling more tenaciously to life than ever, and in order to go on breathing will submit to the perpetuity of a German water-cure, the world at large is ready to question whether life really is worth living. That being so, how is a father to say, "My son, you are indebted to me for your life," when he knows that his son may retort, "Sir, I was never consulted in the matter?" The father has brought the child into the world; but suppose the child does not like the world when it gets there, how is he to answer for it? He cannot say that he married in order to confer the blessing of existence upon other creatures; he cannot say that duty impelled him to do so; and society may not even applaud him for having given another subject to His Majesty, His Majesty's subjects being already very thick upon the ground. The son's retort, if it be made, seems to me unanswerable, and the father can only confess that he has taken an unpardonable liberty with another human being.

Add to this that the propensity of the human mind to fatalism has flung us into a blind belief in the unlimited consequences of heredity. A child's ancestry, we are taught to believe by our modern preachers, the dramatists and novel writers, determines absolutely not only the child's character, but the events in his life. Consequently, for whatever misfortunes befall the child, for whatever misdeeds he may commit, the parents are responsible, who

brought him inconsiderately into the world; and especially the father, since with him the business of selection is still held chiefly to lie. Take all these considerations together—I believe they exist, though obscurely and half realised, at the back of many minds—and can you wonder at the apologetic attitude which the modern parent assumes to the modern child? It is no longer, “My son, I am your father, and your mother is your mother, and if you do not love, honour, and obey us you are an ungrateful dog.” Rather the poor man has the air of saying: “My dear boy, my constitution is not all it ought to be, and my great-grandfather committed suicide: what can I do to atone for the gout which will certainly be your portion, and the hereditary bias which may incline you to cut your throat? Take ten shillings a week pocket-money, and try to bear up.—My dear girl, you mother’s great-aunt ran away with the footman; and the worst is, that I knew the fact when I married.—Do not, I beseech you, let me have to reproach myself more than I already do for having started you in life with a fatal predisposition to levity of conduct.”

Perhaps the state of mind which I have described is rather inculcated than attained; perhaps not even doctors inquire with any accuracy into the medical pedigree of the young ladies whom they desire to marry; and perhaps the world in general would still approve rather than reprobate the action of a lady who, when her *fiancé* was ordered to South Africa with lung disease, to all appearance a doomed man, refused to break off the engagement, married him,

and in a few years brought him back as strong as the rest of us. However, the fact remains that to-day the morality of her action, as well as its wisdom, would be questioned; half a century ago she would have been hailed as a heroine. I do not know that public opinion on this matter has yet become sufficiently ascertained to affect conduct, though perhaps in a measurable time it will be difficult for any man or woman with insanity in the family to get married. But I am sure that the sense of parental responsibility developed to an extraordinary degree within the last century. A hundred years ago, or less, if parents saw that their children were in good health, had proper food and dress, and acquired, in addition to their rudiments, the accomplishments necessary to their station—a little French, music, and drawing for the girls, a little Latin and Greek for the boys—the parents were held to be amply fulfilling their duty. The duty of children, on the other hand, was equally plain: to learn their lessons, to keep out of the way of their elders when they were not wanted, and to be cheerful, and not noisy, when they were encouraged to appear. Consider for a moment in this connection the writings of Miss Austen, which are, among other things, a series of invaluable documents for the social history of her time. Miss Austen—we have it on the authority of the “Dictionary of National Biography”—loved children, and they loved her. But one would never have guessed it from her writings, for in them “boys” always rhymes to “noise,” and the most frequent object of her satire is “the injudicious mother,” who

does not keep her children where they ought to be—in the nursery. Nowadays we are in a lamentable transition period. We may think our children a nuisance—for the modern parent is at heart deplorably unregenerate—but we do not think ourselves entitled to think so. Here are some lines by the author of the best picture-books for children and the best children's plays of our time:—

I think the world is really sad,
I can do nothing but annoy ;
For little boys are all born bad,
And I am born a little boy.

It doesn't matter what's the game,
Whether it's Indians, trains, or ball ;
I always know I am to blame
If I amuse myself at all.

I said one day on mother's knee,
" If you would send us right away
To foreign lands across the sea,
You wouldn't see us every day.

" We shouldn't worry any more
In those strange lands with queer new toys;
But here we stamp and play and roar,
And wear your life out with our noise.

" The savages would never mind,
And you'd be glad to have us go ;
There nobody would be unkind—
For you dislike your children so."

Then mother turned, and looked quite red—
I do not think she could have heard ;
She put me off her knee instead
Of answering one single word.

She went, and did not even nod.
What had I said that could annoy ?
Mothers are really very odd
If you are born a little boy.

The modern mother's contrition, which Mrs. Dearmer indicates in this delicate roundabout way, is quite true to life; but the average matron of the early Victorian period would have known nothing of such heartburnings. Mrs. Dearmer's lady finds her children troublesome at times—which is quite natural—but she is inclined to think that it is very wrong of her to be so intolerant. Her grandmother would have packed the infants promptly out of the room, and never troubled to justify herself for doing so. To be with their elders was a privilege which children had to merit by good behaviour, and being good meant being quiet. Even Miss Edgeworth, who in many ways anticipated the modern theories, was quite clear about that. To her mind the duty of children not to annoy their parents was much more peremptory than the duty of parents to amuse their children; whereas nowadays we are distinctly taught that parents have no right to be annoyed. I should greatly like to call up Miss Edgeworth from the shades and ask her to comment on Mrs. Dearmer's poem. She would explain, I think, to the parent how, by a judicious mixture of rewards and punishment, even a person who has the misfortune to be born a little boy can be induced to enjoy himself quietly in a corner; and to the little boy undoubtedly she would say, that if he wishes other people to be agreeable to him he must be agreeable to other people, and consequently must not shake the table when his mother is writing (see "*Little Frank,*" *passim*). She certainly would never insist, as a good many people do nowadays, that it is

essential to the health of little boys that they should "stamp and play and roar," and consequently that grown-up people have just got to put up with it.

The case of the Edgeworths is really instructive. Mr. Edgeworth was a gentleman of independent means and no occupation, who had a turn for natural science and a passion for lecturing his company; and this passion he indulged for the benefit of his children. The most exacting Froebelian could not expect any parent to take himself more seriously as a parent than did Mr. Edgeworth, and it is only fair to say that his children adored him. Yet I do not find that this model father made any endeavour to enter into his children's pleasures. He merely did his best to make them take up his own whims, and to become little patterns of the great exemplar who sat daily at the head of the long breakfast-table. The model parent, in short, in this instance, was a prig and a maker of prigs; and that is, in my humble judgment, what the model parent is fatally apt to become.

"Come, now, let us live for our children." Such, it appears, was the message which Froebel, the great apostle of modern theories on education, delivered. Let us educate them so that, I suppose, they in their turn may live for their children, and the world be perpetually full of parents sacrificing their own lives to make their children so moral that these in their turn will repeat the sacrifice, and so on *ad infinitum*. For if there is one thing about which the modern theorist is more clear than another, it is that character, not instruction, is the object of education.

We are to teach our children, not how to be good—for the assumption is that children are not bad, and if they do what they ought not to, you should blame their education or their hereditary tendencies—but how to be observant, how to be cheerful, even how to play. In many cases the adoption of these theories has an ironical result; the modern mother is so profoundly convinced that this business of education is a difficult and subtle business, only to be conducted by an expert, that she packs her children out of the house as soon as they can walk, and salves her conscience by paying the bill. In Miss Edgeworth's novels you find innumerable complaints of the fashionable lady who made over her child to a foster-mother, and found the little creature a great nuisance when it returned to her. Nowadays those ladies would have no trouble in the matter; they could commit their infants to a system, and explain to the next person who took them in to dinner how essential it was that the early training of a human creature should be entrusted to a person who had minutely studied the mental processes of children and understood the harmoniously proportionate development of body and mind. Becky Sharp would have been an enthusiastic advocate of the Kindergarten if it had existed in her time, and if Mrs. Rawdon Crawley could have found some one to pay the fees for her. Still, the people who make modern theories an excuse for washing their hands entirely of parental duties are rare. The average mother desires her children's presence; so does the average father—in moderation. But the parent who is theory-bitten is

apt to turn a pleasure into a duty and to destroy the whole value of domestic intercourse. The other day a friend of mine was talking to a proud father about his child—a delightful little girl, as charming as a kitten. "What good company she must be for you!" said my friend. "Yes," the father answered, "and how sad to think that there will be an end of it all in a year!" My friend naturally inquired if there was any reason to be alarmed—any impending separation. It was not that. In a year the little girl would reach the age of three. "And you know, when a child comes to three you must never say anything before it without thinking of the effect that will be produced on the child's character."

This is a true story, and the man was an intelligent man, and quite serious. Can one conceive of anything more lamentable? A person in ordinary society who should never speak or act without weighing the probable moral effect of his word or action would be intolerable; but his neighbours would in all likelihood never find him out; they would simply put him down as a bore. Now, one of the facts that we all admit is the perfectly appalling insight of the pupil into the teacher's mind—an insight narrow and unjust, but on that account all the more appalling. If a parent were to carry out this principle in his intercourse with his child, the child would find him out instinctively before it was five years old; it would know that it was being consciously moulded, and it would resent the fact, as it ought to. And if, instead of a child, there were children, they would talk it over among themselves

and laugh at the inefficacy of the method. No human being likes to be "influenced," least of all by some one who is trying to conceal the process; and the modern theory is, I imagine, not that the children should be preached to or exhorted, but that they should be unconsciously guided in a desirable direction. The result would be one of two things. Either the child would submit knowingly to the process, and would thereby lose much of its natural and invaluable instinct of self-assertion—would be trained, in short, to undervalue and diminish its own individuality; or else—and this would be, happily, a much more frequent occurrence—it would develop character by an instinctive rebellion. Character is not a thing that can be given or imposed from without; it can only grow; though it is quite possible to produce a morbid and unhealthy growth, like that of a flower in a greenhouse. The people who talk about developing character are like those who seek to create health by administering a succession of drugs; for my own part, I believe that both character and health are best promoted by judicious letting alone. Worse mischief is often done by parental interference than by parental neglect. The best thing that can happen to a boy is to be brought up in a simple and natural way—living, that is to say, for the early part of his life among people who are kind to him, but whose orders he has to obey without questioning, and who are for the most part occupied with their own interests—who live their own lives and let him live his. But if from the moment a child comes into the room the father and

mother have to put a constraint upon themselves—to shape their conduct and conversation for his moral advantage—instantly the conditions become forced and unnatural. The behaviour and talk of ordinary decent people have in them nothing that can hurt a child; for the most part, if they go on without reference to him, the child is sublimely unconscious of them, engrossed in his own concerns; for the rest, they appeal to his curiosity, as they ought to do, and waken in him that vague speculation which is the beginning of independent thought. His character is forming itself, both by obedience to rules and by collision with them, and it does not need the perpetual administration of moral prescriptions—prescriptions of which no doctor can foretell the effect.

Nothing can compensate to a child for the loss of a country bringing up; not because in the country he learns to observe Nature (one of the things about which the modern theorist is stark mad)—for the same child who in the country picks up the names of wild flowers, and can tell you the markings of every bird's egg, will get by heart in London all the regimental facings or the list of river steamers, information quite as valuable as the other—but because in the country he is far more left to himself. He can run about and associate with the farm labourers, learning something of a class whom he may never come across in after-life; contract friendships with unwashed and ragged little boys, and in their company continually get his feet wet—literally and metaphorically, too, if you like—without the least apprehension of catching cold. In town he is

under observation all the time, watched over by some one possessing a theory of what is good for his soul and body. It is in town chiefly that children suffer from that physical and moral coddling which is the deadly vice of the modern parent. A lady was explaining the other day that a certain portrait of her son had been completed only with great difficulty. At every sitting the child's temperature went up to such a degree that she almost feared that the portrait must be given up; it was too strong an excitement!

Indeed, a chief objection to the plan of living for our children is the tendency of anxious parents to create some occupation for their anxiety. An old-fashioned mother would have had other things to do than to run about taking her little boy's temperature at odd times. If we are to be continually fussing over our children's health, there results a formidable demand upon our actual time, and, what is worse, upon the leisure of our thoughts. This is in itself undesirable; but the worst is that we are now in a fair way to bring up a race of valetudinarians. The little boy who is used to have his temperature taken when he sits for his picture, will certainly injure his health when he comes to be a man by the simple fact of thinking too much about it; and I should greatly fear that the little girl whose father sets a watch upon his lips in her presence from the time she is three years old, will grow up into a moral valetudinarian, who is the worst type of prig. Happily, the best meant experiments on character often lead to results as widely different from

those that might naturally be expected as they are from the consummation contemplated by the experimentalist.

Nature is too hard for any theory or system. It is quite possible that children who have been brought up to expect that a reason shall be given them for whatever they are told to do, or even children who have been taught to believe that obedience is not necessary unless they approve of the reasons given, may take their place in life without friction or annoyance to themselves and their neighbours. They have inherited instincts of self-adaptation, which will guide them a great deal more surely than their own crude reasonings. But they will probably have been a nuisance to themselves while they were growing up, and certainly will have been a nuisance to their parents. I believe in the experience of the race as against any individual theory, and the experience of the race advises that children should be taught to do what they are bid without asking for reasons. They will reason for themselves on the injunctions, they will judge their parents, and if the orders are unreasonable will judge them adversely; that is the menace which it behoves parents to bear in mind. But a child does not expect to be considered in all things; and it seems to me that if we set out to live for our children, instead of living for our own ideas and work in the world, we shall be putting things on a topsy-turvy basis, and sending our children out into life equipped with a terribly undue sense of their own importance. The adult mind has other work to do than to concentrate itself exclusively upon

the interests of a domestic circle; and the best plan is for decent, clean-minded people to go their own way in freedom, not constrained by the presence of their children, nor continually condescending to the undeveloped intelligence. This continual stooping of the back is good neither for the one who stoops nor for the one who is stooped to. Mr. Edgeworth (to revert to our great example of the model parent) acquired a habit of imparting instruction which made him intolerable in all societies, and while he was teaching to his children (there were nineteen or twenty of them by four or five successive spouses) the theory of soap-bubbles and how to make a model of a water-mill, he left the entire management of his estate to his eldest daughter, who had grown up before his theories developed; and upon his death the eldest son, imbued with all this valuable mechanical knowledge, proved perfectly incompetent to deal with troublesome tenants, and directly a land crisis came handed the books of the estate back to the much-overworked Maria. The son's intelligence had been studiously developed, as Froebel would have dictated, along the line of least resistance; he had not been taught the lesson of doing something that he understood nothing about just because he had got to do it.

That is where the modern theorists seem to me hopelessly in error. Both for the moral and the intellectual part they adopt a system of spoon-feeding. They do not trust nature, which, if you provide food, will generally provide the digestion. Education used to begin with the A B C; but if you

send your children to a Kindergarten, the children will be taught to regard the alphabet as a very advanced branch of knowledge. They will be taught educational games; a whole class of them lie down on the floor and crawl, pretending to be caterpillars; then they get up and flap their hands about because they have become butterflies; that is a lesson in the life-history of the insect world. They model in clay in order that they may learn that a pig has four legs and a tail; they plait rushes in order that they may contribute to the harmonious development of all their faculties by acquiring manual dexterity; they build houses with bricks that they may learn how to carry out a design. I have heard of an instructress of Kindergarten teachers who made her pupils devote an hour a day to learning how to hop like frogs, that they might be able to impart the accomplishment. Even if you do not send your children to a Kindergarten, its theories invade your domestic happiness. People give you complicated Kindergarten toys, and the unfortunate parent has first to learn how to work the toys, and then to teach the children how to work them. But as for reading, that is considered to be too great a strain on the budding intelligence.

By Froebel's system even the rudiments are expressly prohibited till a child is six, and, so far as I can make out, reading is discouraged afterwards. A very clever parent was explaining to me not long ago that his very clever little son was not taught to read because little boys invariably put themselves into unhygienic attitudes over a book. They read doubled up, and that is bad for their

digestions; or they read lying on their stomachs, and that is bad for their eyes. For my own part, I would risk the hygiene for the sake of the education. The only valuable knowledge is the knowledge which we acquire for ourselves; and to teach a child how to read is to give him the key to a world inexpressibly wider than that in which he moves. It is rare for boys to go to school possessing anything that can really be called knowledge; but those who do have invariably got their knowledge by miscellaneous reading in books which they only half comprehended. It is not a habit that is acquired at school, where every hour has its fixed occupation; that is to say, that the average child has only a few years, say from the age of six to twelve, in which to form it; I should be unwilling to postpone the chance of acquiring this habit even to the most scientific instruction in building bricks or in making mud-pies. In short, I would teach a child first of all how to read, because by teaching him to read you put him in possession of the employment which of all others is the most delightful to many children, and those the most intelligent; because you enable him to amuse himself quietly, and because you give him the best chance to find out what sort of things really interest him in life. You open the door to that cultivation of his own mind by himself which is the most important of all.

The rest of education stands on a different footing. It is not an amusement, and you only do harm by pretending that it is. The young teacher nearly always sets out with a theory that his or her business

is to teach boys and girls how to think. In every public school you will find young masters who neglect their proper business—with the best intentions—in order to pass the time agreeably by discoursing on subjects in which they wish their pupils to take an intelligent interest; and other masters, to whom their pupils pass on, have with much bitterness to teach the boys what they ought to have been made to learn in these agreeable half-hours. No human being can teach another how to think, any more than he can teach him how to digest; he can at the most indicate the conditions of healthy digestion and clear thought. But he can, and he ought to, teach him how to learn, which is a deliberate conscious effort of the will and the memory; and to make this effort is not an easy nor a comfortable process. You may decoy a child into knowing all the names of the counties and rivers of England—and he will not be a great deal the better for the knowledge—but you cannot cajole him into learning how to learn. I see lesson-books entitled, “French without Tears,” and so forth, and I distrust those lesson-books. At all events, in the schoolroom of the best teacher that I ever knew there were enough tears shed to fill many buckets, and the pupils were the teacher’s own children. I do not know exactly what they learnt in that schoolroom, but they learnt how to learn, and they even gained a taste for the business. If they liked what they had to do, so much the better; if they did not, they were made to do it all the same—at what a cost of energy and patience only those who have taught can realise. I read in “Child Life,” which is

understood to be the official organ of the most enlightened Froebelians, the rebuke administered to a lecturer when she took upon herself to exhort her Kindergarten students to patience: "There was a look of surprise on every face, and at last one student spoke up and said, "But how *can* one feel impatient with a little child?" The rest of us are not so Froebelian as all that.

The teacher of whom I spoke already had naturally her views upon the art she practised—for teaching, with all deference to Froebel, is an art, and not a science—but, like all artists, she could not define her method. The Bible, common-sense, and good English poetry were the things which she laid down as a basis for elementary education; but, of course, the word "common-sense" begs the whole question. Still, there is an element of suggestion in the list. Good English poetry was ruled out by Mr. Edgeworth, on the ground that it was foolish and wrong for children to learn to repeat words of which they did not know the precise meaning; and there is a very curious passage, in which poor Rosamond is reprimanded when she wants to repeat the opening of Gray's "Elegy" "because the lines sound so very pretty." Her mother tells her that she does not know what "curfew" means, nor a "knell." Rosamond replies, as one would say, like a very intelligent little girl, that she cannot tell the meaning of every word, but she knows the general meaning: "It means that the day is going; that it is evening; that it is growing dark." However, this avails nothing, and she is reduced to a better frame of mind, and accepts, as the

most appropriate poetry for her years, a description in rhymed couplets of a weaving machine—apparently the work of her condescending father.

Mr. Edgeworth, in many ways the type of the modern parent, is on this point not quite in the movement. Everybody admits nowadays that it is well to encourage children to take pleasure in the sound of beautiful words, and in the Froebelian system great importance is given to learning verses by heart. But the verses are verses specially composed, written down to the infant intelligence, and for that reason scarcely examples of good English poetry. It is again the method of spoon-feeding, instead of letting a child learn by heart, as children will do with enthusiasm, the ringing phrases of Macaulay's "Lays" or the songs of Shakespeare, which they repeat for the mere pleasure of the sound, training their ear and their instinct insensibly to the beauties and the uses of language, which is the instrument of all human business and the material body of thought. In education, as in life, a child gains continually by contact with the unfamiliar, at whose meaning he guesses. It is from the mind's tendency to conjecture that we learn to think.

All modern theorists lay great stress, like Mr. Edgeworth, on the importance in elementary education of physical science. I confess to a prejudice on this matter. I can never forget that Darwin, who in his young days loved Shakespeare, when old lost all pleasure in him, but continued to delight in the commonplace novel with a happy ending. It seems as if a mind dwelling perpetually on the tangible and

definite—on the thing that can be absolutely proved or disproved—lost its sense of the mystery and fascination which hang about the meaning of life. By early insistence upon physical science you may develop an undue bias for the material fact, a contempt or distaste for the unascertainable; and the business of life does not deal with fixed quantities. Still, there is enough in science to stimulate the imagination, heaven knows! and of the value of its study as a kind of gymnastics for the mind I have no experience. Comparatively few people have; but no doubt it will be tried. It is an age of science and experiment.

"The great work of the Kindergarten," writes Professor Earl Barnes, "is to help the child to integrate his personal, material, social, and religious worlds." The definition may not be very comprehensible, but it sounds sufficiently comprehensive—too much so for my liking. I should like to adjure the modern parent to ask a little less of education and trust a little more to nature.

It seems that the generation whose children grew or are growing up in the present century are convinced that they themselves were extremely ill educated, and are determined, at all events, to be wiser than their parents. Frankly, I do not think it was so bad as all that. My friends appear to me to be very agreeable and well-educated people, and I see no reason to be discontented with the bringing-up which made them what they are—if indeed the system had much to say to it. My opinion is that in any case, being brought up among the same per-

sons, they would have turned out much the same whatever method had been adopted. The moral part of education can be delegated to no Kindergarten in the world. Our conduct, in so far as it does not proceed directly from our innate qualities, is governed by imitation, conscious and unconscious. The people who influence us first are our parents, with whom we must live in some degree of intimacy; afterwards we are chiefly affected by the associates whom we choose for ourselves. Admiration is at the root of it, and the natural instinct of a child is to look up to the grown-up people it lives with and to adopt their ideas, but only on condition that the elders behave naturally. Boys do not imitate their schoolmasters, for they know perfectly well that their masters assume a behaviour for their edification; perfect naturalness is hardly possible in the relation of teacher and pupil, and, the more we think about influencing our own children, the less likely we are to accomplish it. I have read a paper in "Child Life," which declared that we ought to learn how to "self-express ourselves." But children understand their parents very well, and when one human being deliberately tries to explain himself or herself to another, the result is nearly always misunderstanding; this is the most fruitful source of the quarrels of lovers. The one thing to be avoided is fear—habitual fear. If you cow a puppy you can do nothing with it, and some children are cowed—oftenest by a stinging tongue. Let us concede to the modern parents that this evil is far less common than it would appear to have been even half a

century ago ; the father is not that awe-inspiring personage he once was. Human nature being what it is, one need not be seriously afraid of his becoming in many cases a sort of amateur schoolmaster, like Mr. Edgeworth or the model Froebelian parent.

As for the intellectual side of education, the simpler and more definite our aims are, the more probable will be their attainment. Exactly what children, boys and girls, ought to learn at school is fair matter for discussion, though I can conceive of no more proper basis of study than language, which is to be the vehicle of all our ideas and our means of communicating with our fellows. But the essential thing is that they should learn what they are set to learn ; and the sooner they learn that they have got to learn, the better. This simple but invaluable knowledge will hardly be imparted by efforts after integrating the material, moral, social and religious world of a child, nor even by teaching him how to play.

IN THE SUN.

WHERE I write, this 6th day of March, 1900, with the little toy waves plashing and gurgling three yards from my feet, the sun scorches; and yet it is not even spring. The hills I look at across the bay are purplish brown, where they are not grey with olive, but round the corner of the sea-wall there is snow to be seen on the mountains above Spezzia. Perhaps to-day may be the first of it; but till to-day spring had not yet come. Four days ago dawn showed us ice on all the little pools in Savoy, and the Rhone was a chilly river to look at. But as one watched eastward a peak turned rosy, as only sunlit snow can, and half-way up the gorge to Modane in the Mont Cenis valley, the sun swam up from behind a crest. How long was it since one had seen him? A month, three months, six months—and at all events, one had never seen him like that in London. Eyes could not bear the dazzle of that fluid splendour, not of the disk only, but of all the circle about it that shimmered above the mountains. And everywhere, far down into the steep vineyards, snow caught and reflected the brightness. All the way up the gorge great snow slopes climbed upwards on our left towards the sun and the blue sky; trailing wreaths of cloud lay across them, and the whole rose, cloud above snow, snow above cloud, splendour upon splendour, not the solid earth, but some transparent phantasmagoria of the sky.

There was the sun sure enough that we were come in quest of, but where was the spring? Not in the valley of the Dora, with its vines crawling wherever a fly could find footing, nor in the great plains of Piedmont; no, nor in the Ligurian Mountains, among those other vines and terraces. At Genoa one began to see a flower or two in balconies—stocks and geraniums; and, as we crept down the coast past Nervi, oranges in profusion, and camellias; but when we reached this little town on the bay of Rapallo, I began utterly to despair of the spring. It is true, there were almond blossom and great trees of yellow mimosa; but the ground looked hard and barren, as if it had no nature in it; and there was no feel of growth in the air. Yet there was I basking on a rock and not in the least sorry for the handsome boy who waded barelegged knee deep in the water, gathering periwinkles and limpets to make our oyster patties for Sunday's dinner. I cannot help it. I was never so far south before, and now that I am here, I think of the softness, the universal unbinding, that a day of this heat would bring at home; I miss the lush moist feel of spring, and for the life of me I cannot tell how things continue to grow in this parched, waterless soil. And yet they grow, many of the trees shooting straight upwards; it is only the figs, aloes, and yuccas, not natives here, I fancy, that have those tormented shapes as if they had writhed upwards under a scarcely sufferable sun.

No, spring is not here—not yet, if spring ever comes; though here and there among the olives are

primroses, and violets, too, and even white jonquils, some of them in blossom; here and there a purple campanula, everywhere little arums, like our lords and ladies, but with the hood brown, curled over and striped like a snailshell. There is neither the softness of spring's aspect nor its breathing influence; though, if that is really the wind veering into the west and not merely a back eddy out of the bay, who can tell but in a few days the world may break into leaf and blossom with a rush?

And still, how beautiful it is. Blue rippled water; hills that run down steep to the sea in ridges, every ridge following downwards in a succession of wave-like crests; every skyline feathered with olive or tufted with pine. Blue sea rippling and dancing; and half a score of lateen-rigged boats driving into Rapallo with their sails tilted before the wind, for all the world like a fleet of mayflies adrift on a trout stream. And away to the left, four miles across the water, Chiavari, lying between hill and water, a long low mass, the colour of onyx and jasper.

It would ill befit any of us to speak disrespectfully of the great man whose name has still the hush of death about it; but really Mr. Ruskin was in some moods the incarnation of intolerance. It may be puerile, it may be even vulgar, but it is not inartistic of the Italians to cover their homes with paint that pretends to be what it is not. These life-like representations of balconies where no balcony is, these charming young ladies who open an imaginary window to hang a frescoed rug out of it, are at all events amusing when you walk the streets;

they go to produce that air of life and gaiety which contrast so oddly with the sombre wells of shadow in these narrow streets of high houses; and at a little distance, even from here, as I look across two hundred yards of water to our own little town, the whole resolves itself into a flush of colour against which the drying linen flutters delightfully. But why is it that the Italians build such huge houses? Here, in this little fishing village, are some of six storeys, and scarcely one of less than four. Is it for want of building room, cramped as they are between the hills and the sea? Or is it simply to get more shade in the streets that they pack themselves thus perpendicularly? Perhaps a little of both; but certainly this Eastern Riviera carries an amazing population. As far as one can see, the whole face of the hills is sprinkled thick with houses, and in every nook of the indented coast—that is, every mile or two—clusters a considerable village. Many of the houses are big villas; indeed, the general air of wealth is surprising, and nearly all of these, it seems, are owned by Italians who have earned enough in ten or twenty years of America to make their way home and build, living frugally, I suppose, after the manner of their people, in their sumptuous dwellings.

We are mostly Italian here. Nervi, not far off, is given over to Germans, but in the hotel from which I write all the guests are Italians, except ourselves and five or six of those vagrant, homeless, hard-featured Englishwomen who know and canvass incessantly the water supply and the tariff in every

hotel from the Pyrenees to Venice, and never seem to have spoken to any mere foreigner. International criticism is a thing to be avoided, but one reflection forces itself upon me. If one wanted to be a child one would like to be a child among the Latin races, where infants are few and petted. A small boy and girl, who may be six and eight or thereabouts, share our meals at the long *table d'hôte*, and during the rest of the day are made much of by all the inmates; the salon is generally full of a devoted circle arranging games for their benefit. At dinner, the grown-up things that they eat and the grown-up things that they drink fill a British parent with wonder, and they eat and drink them quite free from interference. I saw with admiration the equanimity of a Roman matron who let her small boy first tackle unassisted some extremely bony little fish, and afterwards proceed to eat a kind of plum-pudding after the fashion of little Jack Horner—only, he picked the plums out with a toothpick.

But I have not yet named the thing that most commends to me this delightful suntrap and the company one finds there. Here are no invalids: this is none of death's beautiful antechambers. Healthy-looking folk come here to enjoy themselves, and there are no glass-fronted shelters to remind one of other people's ailments. Indeed, the country side, villafied though it is, is quite unspoilt, and once you take the steep little paths among the olives they bring you, not into wild nature, for there is no such thing in this over-cultivated seaboard, but into places where you can wander or rest entirely at your

pleasure. They will also bring you to so many views of fantastic cupolaed and turreted villas, so many trellised alleys, with picturesque, though homely, women stepping down bareheaded in sabots and red stockings, so many corners arranged as if for the most obvious decorative effect, that you, a complete stranger, will have the oddest sense of familiarity with the whole, and before you have gone far, it will dawn on you that you are walking in stageland, the happy and delightful country of *opera comique*. Decidedly, the theatre comes to us from the south; and we go to the south as to a theatre.

P.S.—Since I wrote this I have found the spring. Yesterday we followed up the little stream or river that falls into the bay, and going up along past the ropewalks, where men were spinning cord and children turning the wheels for them under the alley of leafless plane trees, it was still winter. But at the head of the cart track, where there is a mill turned by a steep water-shoot from the hillside, the stream takes a sharp bend, the valley doubles southward and then bends back again on itself, so close and cunningly that, as I look now at the lower seaward-facing mountainside, I can only guess at the fold where spring lies hidden. As we followed up the watercourse by a stone-edged path, we were among the chestnuts; on the southern slope opposite us were grey clouds of olive; but spring was in and about the stream-bed itself. There the primroses grew long and high; there the violets were half as big as pansies; there, when you looked close, were

shy lilac-blue hepaticas, and here and there a blue squill. And at the last we came to a tiny cascade not much higher than a tall man. About it hung boughs of yellow cytisus in flower, and on the very face of the fall, with their delicate fronds just brushing the shooting water, but sheltered from it mostly by an overhanging ledge, grew lovely sprays of maidenhair. *Capelvenere*—Venus-tresses—our Italian neighbours called them when we brought them in proudly to dinner. It is well that such pretty greenery should have such pretty names. But our neighbours were agreed with us that though it might be spring in that snug nook of the hillside, everywhere else it was winter—a sunny southern winter, but winter and not spring.

BOOKS THAT PUT ME TO SLEEP.

A GENTLEMAN asked me the other day whether I would advise him to buy a particular book—a book of poems. I may observe in passing that this is an unfair question to put to any writer, because his duty to the guild of letters constrains him to encourage the unusual but praiseworthy impulse and say, “Buy”; yet his conscience may probably prompt him to say, “Do not.” However, my acquaintance was determined to make the problem very definite. “Is it a book I shall want to read six times?” he hastened to add, “because if not, I do not want it. I never buy a book unless I think I shall read it six times.” This was a definition with a vengeance; yet while I protested as a writer of books, I approved as a reader. To re-read is a finer pleasure than to read, for the man who cares about literature. Nobody has such good cause, or rather such sad cause, to know this as a reviewer whose business keeps him eternally reading new books—books which he has never seen before, and in nine cases out of ten (to put it moderately) never wishes to see again. For my part—if I may indulge the passion of autobiography—if I ever read a book gratuitously it is when I administer to myself a novel as a sleeping draught.—Do not throw stones, they will only hit Thackeray, for I shelter myself

behind that genial bulk. In the delightful Round-about "De Finibus," you will read:

"These eyes have more than once seen a friend dozing over pages which this hand has written. There is a vignette somewhere in one of my books of a friend so caught napping with *Pendennis* or *The Newcomes* in his lap; and if a writer can give you a soothing, harmless sleep, has he not done you a kindness? So is the author who excites and interests you worthy of your thanks and benedictions."

I should rather think he had: and I should rather think he was. But the writer who is to be prescribed as a sleeping draught must be able to do the latter before he can accomplish the former. Among the books over which I have gone to sleep—and they are past counting—I distinguish sharply from the many volumes which have forced me unwillingly to somnolence those few which have helped me to go to sleep; and only to the last I am grateful.

They are, all of them, works which were originally anything but incentives to slumber; they would have kept me out of bed at the first reading; but when the story was known, when the mere instinct of curiosity had been gratified (not perhaps only by one reading) when the fortunes of the hero and the distressful damsel no longer weighed upon my soul, then these books began to be gentler delights. They might keep me late for dinner, certainly for church, but they would not interfere with all earthly considerations of prudence or decorum. I would not

say that the pleasure of re-reading a really good story ranks first among the joys of a book-lover. It is assuredly not true that the pleasure increases almost indefinitely as the thing grows more and more familiar, as is the case with the best essays and poems; but it is a great pleasure, and quite different in kind from that which either poems or essays can give. These quicken thought; the good novel, and it alone, can reduce into tranquil quiescence a brain that insists upon working on when bidden to cease.

The habit of reading in bed, which everybody condemns and practises, began with most of us at school, when it had the charm of the forbidden. The chance generally came when one was made a prefect, and enjoined to prevent other boys from reading—an injunction very naturally construed as a permission to read oneself; though this interpretation was not flaunted in the face of authority. A hand was always prompt to come down upon the candle flame if a tutor's step was heard approaching, so that no smouldering or smoking wick should lead to needless inquiries. The habit continued at college, and then one did not always read with a view to sleep. It must have been in December, 1882, that I took a story which had been commended to me and went to bed. It was "*Treasure Island*." About four o'clock I got up, shaking all over with nervous excitement, and went to rummage in my scout's hole for a candle to replace the one that was guttering in the socket. I never was rash enough again to begin a new Stevenson after midnight, but

my strongest allegiance in literature dates from that night. As a rule, indeed, I had more wit than to read new novels in bed, for I have seldom been able to lay down a story unfinished; and there were enough impediments to sleep as it was in that queer little bedroom on the second floor in Brasenose. A great chestnut tree that grew in Exeter gardens swept the windows with its heavy green branches; doves cooed there continually, and a most debauched nightingale sang, not as nightingales should when people want music after dinner, but just about sunrise. And on nights that, after the fashion of college, had prolonged themselves over interminable talk, the nightingale was an annoyance when at last one did get to bed. I have thrown my soap at it, in defiance of all poetic emotions. But in those days it did not matter if one slept or not. Nevertheless, on the whole, it was advisable to sleep, and the book that (after "Treasure Island") is most closely associated for me with that room is, oddly enough, Carlyle's "French Revolution." Why I should have chosen it to read myself to sleep with I cannot imagine, but I read it steadily by small doses in bed for a couple of terms, and it speaks ill for my imagination that the guillotine never haunted my dreams.

But indeed if one's body is sound, dreams shape themselves with very little reference to the last thing that occupies the mind. Not long ago, however, a sickness prevented me from reading to myself and, wanting to be read to, I demanded "Vanity Fair." I never knew before quite how good it was; but it

was too good. It became an obsession in my fever, and after I had spent some hours of sleep in watching with painful intensity the play played where Becky stabs Agamemnon (but in my dream she really stabbed him) I stopped the reading.

Instead of Thackeray we tried Miss Austen, and she never disturbed my dreams. Indirectly it was the cause of tribulation to me, for I wrote an article about her which led to much dispute, but for the moment it was soothing. Yet in my normal state I would never prescribe to myself "Pride and Prejudice" as a means to sleep. The story to take one out of all one's worldly concerns must be more moving and engrossing than I have ever found these delicate masterpieces. Thackeray, for years, I took at his own word, and he fulfilled for me the kind office that he wrote of. But, alas! I was set to edit Thackeray, and could no longer read him without the *arrière-pensée* of something that might be said in a preface. And so I fall back, not unwillingly, on Scott. For I know by experience that wherever and whenever I take up a Waverley novel—it matters little which—at the end of ten minutes I shall be under the spell of the magician. I shall be engrossed in the fortunes of a set of people quite familiar to me, but always companionable; the large and leisurely flow of the narrative will carry me along not impetuously or jerkily, but smoothly and strongly; I shall be listening as a child listens to the ten-times-told story, with a child's pleasure in the known incidents and with a grown-up enjoyment of their natural sequence, the vividness of the nar-

ration, and the life which breathes in each word the personages speak. These things will hold me with delight, yet not with curiosity, till I have forgotten all my own concerns; and when I have heard enough I shut the book and go to sleep, fresh from the sane and happy presence that is still preserved in its pages. Dumas, I think, would do as well, or Fielding. But your modern masters, stripped and pared like Stevenson, or like Meredith, packed with hard thinking, are not for such uses. The older, happier, more genial creations are those to which I at least owe specially, for this gift of forgetfulness, my thanks and blessing.

QUOTABILITY.

IDEAL standards of literary excellence are not easy things to devise, but it is curious to observe what fair results can be obtained by the most empirical and vulgar methods. Take, for instance, the test of sales. Entirely misleading as applied to a limited period, it gives a very fair gauge if extended over a sufficient lapse of time. The plays of Shakespeare, the novels of Sir Walter Scott, have probably been sold in far larger numbers than any other volumes of poetry or prose fiction. And Shakespeare's predominance is, as it should be, by far more marked than Scott's. In the same way, one would incline to assert that the most quoted poet is also the best. Apply this test to contemporary work, it is as misleading as the other which would probably put Miss Corelli or Mr. Hall Caine at the head of our novelists. Mr. Kipling is undoubtedly more quoted than any living poet, but we should be sorry to infer that no one living could write better verse than the "White Man's Burden," "Pay, Pay, Pay," or even than the "Recessional." But, applying the test over the whole range of English literature, one brings out Shakespeare again in a class by himself, and though the appraisement of other poets might not command universal assent, it would do rough justice. A writer like Spenser would be put too low,

while Pope would rank too high; still, their respective value to the literature and to the nation would not be altogether inadequately expressed.

The test applies of course only to poetry. Quotation is a matter of memory and when literature relied on memory literature mainly consisted of verse. It seems pretty clear that fixed rhythm was at least as much a practical expedient as an artistic device. And the poets most quotable and most quoted are those whose words have the most direct bearing on the common business of life. The old theory of the poet's function was very different from the modern one. Now, he is taken to be a creature singing to himself, following out his own dreams, remote, in a sense that Horace or Horace's Greek models never contemplated, from common life. He does in reality hate the profanum vulgus, he shuts it off by a barrier of unintelligibility which the crowd shows no desire to break down. But the poet was formerly held to be one different indeed from his fellows, endowed with a special insight, but speaking to men of men's affairs in words that they could catch up and apply to many passages in life—that is, in words which naturally lent themselves to quotation.

Too strong a bent in either direction—whether toward or away from the common type—leads naturally to a defect in quality. Of all literatures, Latin has been incomparably the most cited, partly because Latin is still familiar to every educated man, but largely also because of the practical bent of Latin genius. Horace is more quoted not only than Virgil but than any poet in the world, yet no one assigns

to him a rank corresponding to this fact. The weakness of Horace lies just in the universal applicability of his sentiments: his counsels are so far-reaching in their wisdom that they approach to platitudes. As Mr. Austin Dobson puts it,

“ No man can say that life is short
With mien so little fretful,
And none to virtue's ways exhort
In phrases less regretful.”

But as Mr. Dobson goes on to hint, we grow a little weary of his wisdom; his sentiments only commend themselves when we would play Polonius. Virgil answers to more real emotion. In such a line as

“ Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco ”

we have the very type of quotable poetry: the sentiment finds a ready response in every man's sense of justice and in the most limited human experience. Had Virgil ever put into an hexameter the counter-balancing thought, expressed in the sentence of Tacitus, “ eo immittior quia toleraverat,” the line might have been not less good but would never have been so widely current: for it would express a truth not less true, but less obvious and moreover less agreeable, and mankind remembers willingly only what pleases and what appeals to every consciousness. “ Proprie communia dicere”—to appropriate by a felicity of utterance some common sentiment—is the way to popularity, as Horace knew; and it is also a leading mark of the greatest poets. Æschylus has more personal colour, Euripides more subtlety, but Sophocles is the great

master. And it is curious to observe how in our own literature, "Hamlet," the most subtle and elusive of all dramas, is nevertheless a perfect storehouse of aphorisms and familiar reflections.

Quotation is in nine cases out of ten quotation of approved moral judgments, though here and there a ringing utterance of revolt capable of widely various application has passed into the common stock—such as "Flectere si nequeo superos Acheronta movebo," or Milton's "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." And that is where the test tends to break down. All men cannot fairly be judged by their best known phrases. From Keats a thousand people have echoed the phrase about a "joy for ever" as against one that ever cited appositely those lines, infinitely more characteristic, that tell of

" Magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

It was Shakespeare's way magnificently to encroach upon the common domain and say, "This is mine, though millions have used it": Keats wandered in lonely places; he does not come to us, we have to go to him. It is only from the lettered that he or those of whom he is the chief receive the tribute that quotation conveys. A phrase remembered for its mere beauty, a thought kept in mind for its strangeness not for its familiarity, is produced at the apposite occasion only by men who have a real sense of literature. To be thus quoted is not a proof of the widest success: but if, as one would gladly think, poets have left something of their souls on earth to

be touched by the fortunes of their poems, it would be perhaps a more valued honour. There must have been joy in Elysium when a departed ghost heard his words re-issued by Charles Lamb with whom, as some one said, quotation was twice blessed —adding a charm to his own work and reflecting a new lustre on the thing he took. It is a strange company that are under this indebtedness to Elia; they range from Shakespeare to Armstrong, who wrote on the Art of Preserving Health. Yet, almost without exception, they had, if they cared to urge it, a grievance against him, for Lamb never quoted accurately. It is a perilous thing to say—but to misquote as Lamb did is the mark of good memory and a well-stored mind: the man who does so carries his reading in his head and the sentences there undergo a chemic change. Yet if Elia had come up to Mr. Churton Collins for review, his case would have been pitiable.

Lamb is himself one of the prose writers who is most quotable. The coloured phrases which he loved to borrow from Fuller and the writers of the older and more fanciful prose (such as that about “images of God cut in ebony”) have their counterpart in his own language. Yet even from him what one cites most readily are words put into a speaker’s mouth like Mrs. Battle’s “a clear fire and clean hearth and the rigour of the game.” And this holds of course far more strongly of the novelists. One remembers, not their own sentiments, but the utterance of some character: like Becky Sharp’s *cri du cœur*, “It must be very easy to be virtuous

on four thousand a year." Of the great men, Scott is the least quotable, Dickens the most, while George Eliot is perhaps more quotable than either. Writers of maxims and moral sentences are of course in a class apart: they have achieved only failure unless they furnish tags that can readily be used in discourse. And among these it is noticeable that the greatest men, Swift, for instance, and Pascal, have the least currency because they cannot divest themselves of their individuality: they cannot think sufficiently like every one else. La Rochefoucauld is in this group what Horace is among the poets, the most commonplace and the most successful of them all. With the exception of a few flashes, such as the superb description of hypocrisy as the homage that vice pays to virtue, he simply crystallizes to a diamond point the vague opinion of every man of the world, who finds in the "Maxims" his own philosophy and recognizes it. It is not so easy to recall the exact turn of a thought as it leaves the subtler minds. But it is a fair way of estimating greatness to say that he is greatest who has had most influence on humanity; and the authors who have had most influence are on the whole those whose words have been most frequent on the lips of men.

THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD.

BENEVOLENCE, said Hobbes, is a love of power and delight in the exercise of it. Yet this trenchant definition never provoked from a somewhat self-righteous mankind such protest as was roused by La Rochefoucauld when he laid it down that virtue is for the most part only self-love in disguise. Perhaps mankind felt instinctively that the Frenchman had overstated his case, but were not equally sure of confuting Mr. Hobbes. For, although there exist men and women with whom a conscious desire to gratify self is the predominant motive—who habitually think not simply of what they are going to do, but of the way in which their sensations will be affected by it—yet these persons are rare and exceptional: not less rare than those others who think constantly how to gratify their neighbour. Action in itself is pleasant; inaction, except by contrast, destitute of pleasure; and when the ordinary mortal does something outside his strict business, this supererogatory act is generally performed for the natural satisfaction which attends the accomplishing of any end.

Low down in the scale of evolution men are impelled to act by the pains and pleasures attending hunger and thirst. Yet even here it is pretty certain that if one savage sees another whittling incompetently at a stick in the endeavour to make a bow,

he will take the tool and go to work himself sooner than watch the job bungled. He will not be deterred by the notion that in equipping a rival he sacrifices something of his own superiority, for the excellent reason that the idea will not occur to him. He will do the thing just for the sake of doing it right—desiring, so far as he consciously has a desire in the matter, the glow of gratification that attends any successful exhibition of power just as surely as pleasure accompanies the filling of a stomach.

In the sphere of life that most of us think about, hunger and thirst have only a theoretical existence. We assume that we shall always have enough to eat and drink: necessity is not crudely before us. We work, no doubt, in order to get more of the good things of life, but we work also very largely to let off steam.

It is an axiom of conduct that if you want a thing done you should go to the busiest man of your acquaintance; and we all act upon this maxim without reflecting that it concedes the theory that benevolence is a love of power. How else but on Hobbes's principle should one account for this practical paradox? Is it to be supposed that busy men are more sympathetic than idle ones? Hardly. If you want sympathy, someone to be sorry for you or glad with you, an idle person is the best recipient of your confidence. You will occupy a larger and a more enduring place in his mind. But two things go to make up benevolence—sympathy and energy—and for practical purposes energy is the more important. It might seem that sympathy lies nearer

to the fount of action, and is, therefore, to be ranked as a cause, whereas energy is merely a condition. And this is true in a sense. Stupidity and indolence are the two hindrances to benevolence, and of the two, stupidity—that is, dulness of perception—is the more potent obstacle; for the stupid man will never realise in sympathy the need of help, nor leap to a sight of the means to supply it; the indolent man may be moved by sympathy to shake off his indolence.

But my contention is that most acts of practical benevolence are traceable not to sympathy, the desire to help, but to energy, the instinct to do. Every energetic man is a reservoir of unexhausted force, for hardly anyone is employed up to the limit of his capacity. No salary will buy the monopoly of a man's power, and very few have so much work to do for themselves that there is no energy left over. Certain pursuits really engross men, such as the passionate study of an art, or the business of money-making, when the object is not to gain what money will buy but simply the acquisition of wealth. But these cases are abnormal; and if you go to the ordinary successful busy man with a request for help in a difficulty, you propound to him a practical problem: What is to be done? If he likes you, it will of course give him pleasure to gratify you, but the exertion by which he does so will be pleasant for its own sake. And even if you are perfectly indifferent to him, you will still have propounded a problem to one who has the habit of doing things and the instinct for getting them done. His mind

by its very nature and training instantly turns to think of an expedient. He sees something that can be done, and in nine cases out of ten cannot resist what is really an appetite to do it; the surplus energy flows as naturally as water when you turn a tap. Moreover, it is a positive pain to a capable man to see labour misapplied, capacity going to waste, or a life bungled; and if he interposes, it is often from just the same motive as the savage with the bow; he helps because he cannot endure to see the work being done badly.

It is worth while to emphasise this aspect of benevolence, because so many people, especially in England, dislike the idea of "giving trouble," as they call it—but in reality the idea of laying themselves under an obligation. Yet, if they could realise how they themselves would welcome the chance of doing a good turn to some acquaintance, there would be less of this ungenerous reluctance. It is the sense of obligation which breeds ingratitude; for ingratitude is not merely indifference, but an ill-suppressed malignity. "I owe him one" is the thought of the ungrateful, and it bears a sinister meaning. The cheerful and natural philosophy of Hobbes would tell us that we have afforded another human being the delight of exercising power which he loves, and if we are the gainers by the transaction, why, so is our friend. The other view of the relation degrades benevolence almost to the level of the charity which confers an official merit on the giver and an official stigma on the recipient. Yet the Charity Organisation

Society would, I am sure, disclaim all pretension to benevolence, and whatever unfortunate has gone to them for help will amply bear them out in the disclaimer. The essence of benevolence lies in giving help which is both given and received with pleasure, and no right-minded person can feel a pleasure in giving what cannot be accepted without a sense of humiliation. The Society I speak of, which stands for the perfected type of scientific almsgiving, concerns itself with strict justice—administration of the indispensable aid. Benevolence does not look so closely into the title to assistance, does not ask whether he or she has failed to save money, but helps simply for the sake of helping. In this way benevolence is often first-cousin to jobbery; and for jobbery also there is a good word to be said.

Most of the help which is worth giving or getting takes the shape of assisting another person to find work. And that help comes to us chiefly (we are taught to believe) from our connections, but in my own experience of life much more often from our competitors—that is, from those in our own profession. One hears a great deal of professional jealousies, and very little of professional good-fellowship, yet the latter is in reality a much more potent factor, and for good reasons. To begin with, every man knows the ropes more or less in his own trade; professional knowledge suggests means to help which would be less evident to an outsider. But this does not account for the willingness to put those means into operation—a willingness which, nevertheless, can be quite easily explained.

The career of each of us is to himself or herself a matter of the most vivid interest; every colour, every shade, every turn in a life is acutely realised by the person who lives it. Yet to the rest of the world, as Mr. Hardy has remarked in more than one page of melancholy comment, each of us is only a passing thought—to our nearest and dearest, only a thought of frequent recurrence. The points at which our fortunes are least inadequately realised by our neighbours, at which they assume to others something of the importance that they wear to ourselves, are the points of community. The ambitions, the hopes and fears, of a son who is a barrister must be always somewhat vague to his father, the doctor; but every other barrister is interested by them almost as keenly as a woman by all that relates to a girl friend's marriage. That is the cause of professional sympathy—a feeling so strong that for one man who stops to reflect that the profession is already overcrowded, and competition increasing in severity, you shall find twenty who gladly give a hand to the man on a lower rung of the ladder, regardless of the fact that he may one day be jostling them off it. They will remember to put in a word where a word is useful, when another friend with equal opportunities, but not of the craft, would forget, just because the young man's fortunes resemble their own as one woman's love affairs resemble another's. Professional benevolence is, in short, very nearly allied to matchmaking, and, like nearly all the most lovable traits in human nature, has no claim to be regarded as a disinterested virtue. The healthy-minded energetic man does not stop to

consider whether the man he backs is the ideal person for a given employment—he simply desires to get the job for the man whom he is backing. I have no doubt that the trouble which he will take for almost an absolute stranger is unconsciously prompted by the desire to effectuate his own personality, to utilise some of his spare energy in accomplishing an end with which he has identified himself.

Perhaps it is wrong to deny that this natural propensity of a strong physical and mental constitution should rank as a virtue when it is exercised on behalf of mere friends or acquaintances. But if so, I am sure it should not be condemned as nepotism or jobbery when allowed free play on behalf of kinsfolk. We praise the Scotch for the clannish tendency which they seldom fail to manifest when a Scot is among the candidates for an employment (the Irish, I am glad to say, exhibit something of the same characteristic), yet what is this but the most extended nepotism? Even if we grant that the ideally benevolent man will be too delicate to make interest for himself or his nearest kin, but will wear himself out in the endeavour to serve some stray aspirant who, either by promise of merit or need of help, has excited his sympathy (and I have known such a character), yet it must be urged that the men who go far out of their way to secure good things for their relatives are as a rule the industrious, active men who do service to the world. They are also men who, in default of a kinsman, will be exceedingly prone to serve a stranger sooner than leave undone a good turn which they see their way to doing. Of course, like all other

creditable and harmless propensities, this may be exaggerated into a defect, just as every truth may be pushed into a heresy ; but upon the whole nepotism lies nearer to virtue than to vice, and a race or family in whom the instinct of racial benevolence has died out is in extreme danger of dying out itself. But it is superfluous to labour a defence of jobbery. The virtue of nepotism is commended to us by the highest examples : State, Church and Law lend it illustrious sanction.

On the other hand, there is a kind of benevolence which runs very easily into an odious failing, but is the sort which popularly figures as an accredited virtue. This is the benevolence which seeks to substitute its own virtuous will for its neighbour's possibly very inferior inclination ; which is always willing, and even anxious, to help its neighbour, but not as the neighbour desires to be helped. There is no need nowadays—or there should not be—to condemn the other-worldliness which sees in the human beings placed at a disadvantage the occasion for a profitable investment of good works. And yet there are still those who argue that Socialism is impious because it seeks to abolish poverty, whereas we are promised that the poor shall be always with us, to afford stepping-stones to celestial preferment. This, however, is not benevolence. The benevolence of which I speak is the benevolence of a benevolent despotism—love of power passing into a tyranny. Your respectable Christian who knows a young man bent upon becoming an actor, an agitator, or a journalist, or undertaking any other of the pursuits

disapproved by respectable Christians, and who offers that young man a stool in his counting-house, may be doing a wise thing, but is not really benevolent. And yet in many cases he talks of black ingratitude because the would-be artist or politician does not thank him for the offer, and perhaps rejects it with contumely. Such, says the respectable Christian, is the reward of benevolence. But benevolence consists in helping your neighbour to attain an end which he desires, not in substituting an end which you would be glad to see him attain by your help. Much of the assistance offered with the keenest sense of merit in the offering is about as valuable or appropriate as the ugly sack stitched at a working-party is to the South Sea islander whose harmonious proportions it is designed to conceal. Sometimes the offer is accepted, and, whether it be the sack or the high stool, it seldom does much good to the person who accepts what is foreign to his (or her) whole nature and desires.

Yet suppose it accepted, and suppose everything turns out well, who is to be grateful? I who accepted, let us say, or you who volunteered the help? I may be grateful for assistance that I sought or desired, but this was none of my seeking. The conventions demand that I should feel gratitude, but the morality of the case is very different. To interpolate our personality into the life of another human being is always a liberty, it may be an impertinence; and if the act, however kindly meant, be taken in a friendly spirit, we should be amply contented. We have had the satisfaction of doing what we designed

to do; we have probably been thanked for it. The gratitude that endures should be on our side, for there is no truer truth than that we love those whom we have benefited—another person being converted into a monument of our good deed. To be angry because someone else will not efface his will to let us have this satisfaction is really iniquitous. Benevolence is not often self-sacrifice—it is always self-realisation; and to attempt to realise ourselves at someone else's expense, to express our own personality by sacrificing our neighbour's, is one of the wickednesses which not only escape the social stigma, but continually masquerade as virtues.

In short, the luxury of doing good is a luxury, and, like all luxuries, carries with it a temptation. We cannot do too much good; but we can easily administer to ourselves too often the pleasant sensation of having done it, neglecting to establish thoroughly the necessary premise that we have provided a pleasurable sensation to our neighbour. Very often does the sense that we have "done him good" arise out of the triumphant conviction that we have administered to our neighbour a sensation the reverse of pleasurable.

READING ALOUD.

WE hear—most of us with an incredulous wonder—of gifted beings who can enjoy reading the printed score of a piece of music. Probably no one has yet been found to assert that he or she would rather read music than hear it performed; but to this point we may very well come if the development of that peculiar sense by which we enjoy literature be carried much further. Nine people out of ten will say that they would sooner read a book, or even a poem, than hear it read to them; they will suspend judgment, appealing from the untrained ear to the other trained and trusted faculty which operates through the eye. And yet the art of putting words together should imply that the words for their full effect are meant to be uttered, just as surely as music is meant to be played or sung. Nobody would say that a poem pleases his eye. What it is precisely in the modern reader that a poem does please, would not be so easy to define. It is not the sense of sight; yet for many of us it is probably true that the colour and associations of a given word (which are to the artist in words what fabric, sheen and colour are to a weaver in framing his pattern) begin to cluster around the physical image of certain letters arranged in a certain way rather than about the sound of spoken syllables. And in so far as this is true, literature is on the way to perdition. No art can,

without injury, divorce itself from the gratification of some human sense, and the function of the eye in reading is purely mechanical and pleasureless; whereas that of the ear in listening has its own pleasure wedded to it. Cheap printing is destroying literature. Let us consider the matter historically and see whether this assertion be too sweeping.

Poetry, which is the oldest and most indestructible of all the arts, can never be divorced from sound. It grew into being independent of pen and ink; it continues still in very great measure independent of these. The most hardened of us, who make our sentences in prose concurrently with the act of writing and who very often cannot frame a thought in words without the opportunity of thus visualising it (listen to the speeches of literary men), even we, the tritest hacks of the pen, when we take in hand to write verse, as must sometimes happen, throw the pen to the devil. Verse demands to be constructed first of all as a combination of sounds; it demands to be appreciated by the test of utterance. Your reviewer in a hurry will stop and read aloud to himself a stanza or a whole poem; catch him doing that with any passage in a novel! Why should he? He is not meant to. Prose grew up by the aid of letters and postulates a book, written or printed. Yet, so long as the book was a rarity, prose was in this respect on a footing with poetry, that it had to count on being read aloud. Whoever wrote in the sixteenth or seventeenth century wrote to the ear, not merely to the eye; hence (in their different excellences) Bunyan's flowing utterance, Milton's flaming

periods. Men had not yet learnt the trick of the shortened and condensed sentence, so convenient to the eye, which does not easily carry the mind through involved clauses: they had not yet acquired the peculiar tone and idiom of the written word which is designed to convey its effect without the aid of actual speech. In Swift's finished manner this art reached its perfection, for the written word was not yet wholly divorced from the cadences of a man's voice speaking. It was left for Johnson to complete the severance; and Macaulay, modifying Johnson's methods, made the emphatic toneless prose which has since that day been employed by the persons who are called publicists. Away vanished all the subtle, delicate inflections of Addison and of Goldsmith—men who wrote in an age when the paper or the novel was still constantly read aloud in a family circle or even in a coffee-house not yet littered with prints. Since Macaulay's period, since the day of the penny press, every man has written, every man writes, with the knowledge that the word which goes to the reader must reach its billet through the eye. The result is that most of us write, as nearly all of us read, in a monotone; and those who escape from the monotone do so often by vehemence and at a sacrifice of delicacy. Mr. Hewlett, for instance, shouts his story at us very much as a poster assails our eye. Will you look, he seems to be saying (not without expletives); and we, taking in the story through our eyes, are doubtless quickened into a sharpness of perception. Yet if the scene were read aloud to us (for instance, that of Rizzio's killing in the *Queen's*

Quair) we should be apt to feel that his method was inartistic in its violence. *Segnus irritant animum demissa per aures*, remarks a critic of some repute, who is nevertheless a supporter of the art of words in preference to the crudity of spectacle. But Horace practically assumed, as did the Greeks also, that in the craft of literature words would be sounded. It does not suffice for them to be *oculis subjecta*. The artist in language cannot without heavy loss dispense with the human voice.

This growing disease of literature, this divorce of modulated thought from modulated sound, is presumably without remedy. Mankind always gets in the long run what the mass of mankind prefers, and custom imposes itself. All educated people would declare a preference for the old-fashioned magazines over the modern jumble of photographs and advertisements, yet even those who declare the preference will buy, nine times out of ten, what everyone else buys. In the same way the kind of impatience which sends a reader galloping through ten bad books instead of taking his leisure over one good one, is general in humanity; yet those who read fast cannot hear the sound of what they read, even by an intellectual process. The more easily books are available the faster people will read, the less they will dwell on what is written, and books will undoubtedly be multiplied increasingly. The remedy, if remedy were to be found, would surely lie in a revival of the disused and discredited art which is now relegated to governesses, to old ladies' companions, to vicars' wives in charge of mothers'

meetings, and to the reading-desk on Sundays? *Post hoc* and *propter hoc*, in this case as in so many, interchange in a vicious circle. People prefer to read to themselves, because so few read aloud with grace and discretion; few can read aloud as intelligent human beings ought to do, because nearly everyone prefers to read a book for himself. To end this it would be necessary to begin somewhere, and a good first step would be to hang all professors of elocution. These men declare war on rhythm; yet whether in prose or verse, rhythm is the thing that matters. Again, your professional teaches the pupil to be slow, to make long gasping pauses, and yet in reading prose a reader's chief merit is to get over the ground. Verse is another matter, here the voice may justifiably hang on the rhythm; but in reading narrative or argument, the most golden voice will not compensate for any lagging behind the natural action of the mind. And here is a point that is worth considering. Nowadays people think it worth while to put their bodies through many gymnastics to obtain grace and strength. They train their voices without the rudiments of education, and the result is wofully present with us in the fashionable woman's high-keyed monotonous staccato. Yet after all there is nothing pleasanter, and there is nothing more subjugating than a voice that has sweetness and variety, power and range; and there is no better way to mend a bad voice or perfect a good one than by learning to read easily and flexibly, so that the living organ evokes the life which lies immanent in words vitally constructed. Many a gracious woman takes into the

world a grace and a charm acquired beside the cot or in the children's hour; since for nursery uses, and almost alone for these, is the ancient art still practised. Almost, yet not quite; for good poets still have the kind of prolonged existence which George Eliot aspired to in her only good poem; and they may find their life renewing itself whenever and wherever a lover reads their verses to his mistress, whether by the glowing hearth in winter, or, better still, in mossy places among trees, or under shining sun and wind somewhere within hearing of the sea.

JAMES HOWELL.

THERE are certain books for which one has a comfortable, easy regard that commits to nothing more than a pleasant acquaintanceship. I do not think that I could really be friends with anyone who did not love Charles Lamb; and it is a sore trial, but one which, in this generation, has to be endured when people that you care for cannot or will not read the Waverley novels. But it is a matter of complete indifference to me whether my friends do or do not find anything to like in Howell's "Instructions for Forraine Travell." The day when I first read it, in one of Professor Arber's musty but scholarly reprints, is not marked with a white stone; I have forgotten who told me to read it; but I am still grateful for the advice, and I have dipped into the respectable old Welshman a good many times since the first, and never without pleasure. I like the quaint sententiousness and the fine comprehensive spirit of this first handbook to the Continent. Howell tells you what you should do to improve your mind, how you should preserve your religion, what sort of clothes you should wear in each country, and where your morals will be in special danger; he does not pin you down to stupid details about a particular inn, or times and distances of a journey. But those were the days—he published in 1642—when Englishmen

'travelled on the Continent'; now they 'go abroad.' Half one's acquaintance winter every year in Italy, by the Pyrenees, or among the Alps, and never have occasion to speak a word of any tongue but their own; they eat the same dinner in hotels of the same pattern, waited on by the same Swiss or German waiters; but, to do them justice, they do not call it travelling. Travelling now-a-days means picnicking uncomfortably among black, brown, or yellow savages; and the successful traveller is he—or she—who gets to a place where no one has ever been before, and where no reasonable person would ever want to be again.

Howell's traveller was a person who wanted to see the cities of civilised men, to know their minds, like Ulysses, and to live their life. He joyfully accepted new conditions of existence, and studied to adapt himself to them, doing at Rome as Rome did; not like the modern Englishman, who pervades Europe with his tub and his tweed suit, unmistakable, irreproachable, and serenely conscious that everywhere the best-dressed people are trying to look like him, and not succeeding. "Whatever you do, my dear boy, try and keep an English cut," was the exhortation addressed to Daniel Deronda (well back in the last century) by his respected and respectable patron; and it was prophetically wise; for apparently it is still the aspiration of every man in Europe who values himself on externals, to be "correct" and to have an English cut. Things were very different in the days of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts. Howell needs to caution his travellers against too

great an affectation of foreign dress and customs; and this censure of imported tricks of manner, and especially of “a phantastique kind of ribanding themselves” recalls Portia’s description of Falcondridge, “the young baron of England.” “How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round-hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.” According to Howell, that is just what a young Englishman on the grand tour was likely to have done, or at least needed to be warned against doing. We have changed all that; but certain characteristics of the race remain constant. A tendency to violent hurry is one of the things that Howell’s traveller should learn to shake off, for “The English generally are observed by all other nations to ride commonly with that speed as if they rid for a midwife or a physition”; and this same half-tolerant wonder is excited to-day by our perspiring energy upon a bicycle. Again, Howell notes:—“In these hot countreyes one shall learne to give over the habit of an odde custome, peculiar to the English alone, and whereby they are distinguished from other nations, which is to make still toward the chimney, though it bee in the dog-dayes.” The trait is still recognisable.

Of Howell as a literary man, I voluntarily limit my knowledge to this one book—a pamphlet, for it is little more. Others have praised, and I believe have even read the *Epistolæ Hoelianæ*; and Sergeant-Major Peter Fisher, Poet Laureate to the Protector (surely the least known of all laureates), declared, in an address to the Reader, prefixed to

Mr. Howell's "Poems upon divers Emergent Occasions" that "not to know the author of these poems were an Ignorance beyond Barbarism." For my own part, I am content with what Mr. Fisher calls his "Topical and exact way for Forreign Travel," and chiefly with his remarks by the way. Here and there in the work one lights upon a patch of sheer Euphuism, in Llyl's purest manner, which seems oddly belated in the middle of the seventeenth century. "There is no complete and uncontrouled comfort," he writes. "This extends from the Lord to the Laquay, from the Peasant to the Prince, whose Crown is oftentimes inlayed with thornes, whose robe is furred with feares, whereof the Ermine is no ill Embleme, having as many black spots in it as white." This elaborate "hunting of the letter," and this ingenuity of metaphor, puerile as it is, keeps a certain charm. Writing in those days must have been a really amusing business, a sort of sleight-of-hand. Howell helps one to trace the connexion between Llyl's parade of artifice and Bacon's subtler employment of the same devices. He quotes Bacon freely, and imitates him not without success. "Touching Poets," he writes, "they must be used like flowers, some serve only to be smelt unto, but some are good to bee thrown into a Limbique and to be distilled; whence the memory may carry away the Elixir of them, for true poetry is the quintessence or rather the Luxury of Learning." It was a pleasant age also for authors that permitted itself to italicise whatever seemed to the writer specially admirable; and the most effusive lady could not be more lavish

in her use of underlining than the ingenious old Welshman, who, Welsh or not, emphasises in this way the whole of two pages which he devotes to a eulogy of Great Britain and of the English tongue. Yet he was Welsh enough to know his own tongue, too, for he notes upon the fact that "the old Italian tunes and rithmes, both in conceipt and cadency, have much affinity with the Welsh." But Howell's philology (of which he is somewhat profuse) does not incline one to regard him as trustworthy on points of scholarship. As for his political reflections, they were probably as good sense as any other political reflections in their day, but it is no longer exciting for us to consider whether England should have leant to the side of France or of Spain. What keeps a permanent value in Howell is, first, the insight which he gives us into the curiosity of an older age; for instance, in Switzerland his traveller is bidden to observe the political institutions of "those rugged Republics"—the Alps are merely an obstacle that has to be got over; and, secondly, his very attractive talent for aphorisms and his picturesqueness of phrase.

Perhaps it may be pardonable, since I do not think that Howell is likely to become widely popular, to exemplify his quaint turns of thought. He has a witty piece of advice to his traveller "not to laugh at his own jest, as too many use to do, like a hen which cannot lay an egge but she must cackle"; and a very honourable counsel, finely expressed, not to lay upon a nation the vice of a few individuals. "One should," he says, "Parcere paucorum diffun-

dere crimen in omnes. And it is a generous kind of civility to report always the best." I admire, also, what Mr. Peter Fisher calls the "vein of poesie," running through Howell's prose "in the concinnity and succinctness thereof," as when he declares that the Hollanders "plow the very bowels of the Deep, the wrinkled forehead of Neptune being the furrows that yield them increase." Better still, perhaps, is his recommendation to his traveller not to neglect a diary. "For the Penne maketh the deepest furrowes, and doth fertilise and enrich the memory more than anything else." But chiefly what I like about old Howell—and I find myself coming back to the point whence I started—is his conception of travel. By travel he means moving slowly through other countries, picking up their languages so as to speak them intelligibly, though without affectation, and conversing especially with the people of those countries. He does not go on to the Continent to see mountains, or churches, or pictures; he goes to see men and to observe the constitution of States. And when I read his execration of those who "travelled much but saw little, like Jonas in the whale's belly," I wonder if he had a prophetic vision of the *train de luxe* and the *wagon-lit*.

IN A MOORISH SEAPORT.

A GREAT many Europeans have seen Tangier, and whoever has seen Tangier thinks very naturally that he who has been in Morocco, has seen Morocco. The moment you land, even before landing, when boats come alongside, the eye is glutted with strangeness and with beauty. Going up through the streets, those narrow cobble-paved lanes where no wheeled vehicle passes, as you push your way among men and women dressed as their ancestors have dressed for many centuries, among saddle-horses, laden mules and donkeys, progressing among cries of "balak, balak" (clear the way)—as you look at the little cupboards, six feet square, where the shop-keeper squats crossed-legged within arm's length of any of his wares—you say to yourself inevitably: "This is the real thing." Yet everywhere as you look about, you will see the trousered European pass among the robed figures, like a stage-carpenter in the midst of some gorgeous dress rehearsal. Not until you have the chance to compare the life of Tangier with that of some place really Moorish do you realise the significance of that undecorative apparition. Then, indeed, you understand that Tangier is not Morocco at all; that it is an excrescence on the country, a lodgment of the European bacillus, a Moorish city where the European, if he does not rule, at least prevents the Moor from

ruling, where a compromise between two civilisations is arrived at by accepting the vices of both.

Of course, even in Tangier, Moorish life exists unaffected by the influence of the stranger; but the stranger in a general way will not see it. Moorish homes are closed against him, the mosques are inaccessible; there remain only the market-places which he does see, and the cafés which he does not. Your guide will undoubtedly take you to a place where Moorish musicians play and sing; where you will see well-dressed Moors smoking and playing cards. But these Moors are generally professional guides; there are seats specially provided for the European; for his edification the walls are covered with a glare of tawdry decorations, and to him the band look for payment, after they have finished the wild tune which quickens strident strings and clashing cymbals to a whirl of battle fury—the tune to which the Moors conquered Spain. A savage irony, is it not? Yet, every genuine Moor, though he may come begging to you for pence in exchange for some trivial service, believes implicitly that the proper place for his foot is on the neck of the European.

The real thing can, of course, be seen easily enough, even in Tangier, but the ordinary guide will not take you to see it, nor does the ordinary resident go to the really Moorish cafés. The reason is sufficiently simple; one goes at the risk of a certain most unromantic affliction. But I had gone to Morocco under a friend's auspices (commended by him to the Moorish gentleman who had been his

companion during several years of residence and travel up and down the country), and this friend told me it was worth while to take the risk, though he himself had expended large sums on Mr. Keating's confection. I followed his advice (with tolerable impunity, too); and though I have pleasant memories of rides about Tangier, of bargaining in little shops, and of watching the ever-changing pageant of the market-place and the streets, what I really saw of Morocco in Tangier I saw in this manner.

It is the usage of the hillmen when they come to Tangier to gather in a café kept by some man of their own clan; near my hotel, on the market-place, was a row of these booths, and the owner of one had served my friend. Here I used to spend hours with my guide, a shereef belonging to the hill clan; and here one saw no trace of the European. The accommodation was of the simplest. Against the wall of a stable-yard were built party-walls, dividing the space, so that each café, when roofed over, made a single long room perhaps twenty-five feet by twelve. This was carpeted with matting, and at the entrance sack-cloth was thrown down, on which shoes had to be left. To the right of the door was a large barrel of water; in the corner, to the left, the charcoal fire, set high up in a stove, over which tea and coffee were always preparing, cup by cup. A couple of stools and boxes stood by the water-tank, and here I used to sit; the Moors squatted cross-legged on the floor, and of an evening they would be close as sardines in a tin. The whole picture was in tones of brown,

for all these countrymen wore the jelab, or cloak, of brown sack-cloth, sometimes tagged here and there with red and green, and though a few might be turbaned, the generality wore round their heads either a rope of camel's hair, or the brown cloth rifle-case. A goodly show of rifles hung on the walls, for guns, though carried in the market-place, were not, as a rule, taken into the town. But once I saw the good-humoured host, Abd-el-Kerim, rise and depart, and, before he set out, sling a large cutlass about him. "I suppose," said the shereef, in answer to my question, "he has an enemy." No one else took the least notice.

Once, as I sat there, a company of people came in, all robed in white, with hoods pulled over their heads; the leader, a man of about thirty, began rapidly, but with impressive utterance, to declaim a form of words, and it came with a sort of shock to me to hear the youths who followed him chime in at the close, "Amen." While he went through a series of these prayers, punctuated with the "Amens" close and sharp as volley-firing, the shereef explained to me that this was a scribe with pupils training to be scribes; that they left their colleges and went on tour for a while, asking alms from town to town in order to provide for the great festivity with which their holiday opened. When the prayers ended, one of the pupils went through the company collecting pence, and as he went past I gave my contribution to the shereef to offer. But the scribe stopped short, looked a little confused, and said hurriedly (so the shereef interpreted) that he offered prayers for

money, and that he could not offer prayers for an infidel. However, when we explained that it was the gift of a scribe to a scribe, and that I was willing to forego my part in the prayers, he bowed and smiled courteously, and, with his pupils, vanished into the night, to resume his collections elsewhere. Such small traits of usage can be seen in a hundred places in Tangier. I did not stray beyond Abd-el-Kerim's fold, partly because of my liking for his general welcome, partly because of a belief that the less one moves about in a country, where all is strange, the more one sees.

But the place in which I really feel that I saw something of Moorish life was the little port of Laraiche, some fifty miles from Tangier, where I was detained by foul weather for a matter of ten days. There were Europeans here, about one in a thousand of the population, but one hardly saw them; they managed nothing except the steam traffic. Doubtless, the rules which governed the town could be suspended or evaded for their benefit, but not always. The gates of Laraiche, for example, shut at sundown; after that the ordinary person could not enter or go out, and travellers, camped in the market-place outside, had to complete their purchases in good time. Once, moreover, after a ride in the surrounding country, I found the town shut against me not long after noon; and my shereef explained that it was a Friday, the Moorish Sunday, and the hour of prayer. Long ago, in Andalusia, Spaniards had fallen on a town and surprised it while the whole body of believers were at their devotions; since then

it was the usage to bar out all comers during the sacred hour. All this discipline of life, normal everywhere else in Morocco, is not found in Tangier.

Nor was this the only curtailment of liberty. At half-past eight a gun was fired, and after it no one was entitled to walk the streets. I am bound to say that my shereef disregarded the rule, but he was, to begin with, a shereef, and, to go on with, a Russian subject; it is the extraordinary practice of European nations in Morocco to issue protections to favoured Moors, enabling these citizens to defy their own Government. Moreover, he was acquainted with the authorities, as I found when we went to view the prison, which again marked the contrast between Morocco and Tangier. For at Tangier everybody goes, as a matter of course, to see the gaols, where prisoners stick their heads through a wicket and accost you volubly (I noticed with interest that every inmate of the town-gaol was a fluent speaker of English), and where the gaoler is an oily impudent ruffian, with a hand indecently itching for tips. Here at Laraiche the prison was an edifice of some dignity; a strong place, it guarded the most important captives of the region, kaims and other high officials in disgrace, and no communication was permitted. Outside it, in a sort of guard-house at the entrance, on a cushioned seat, reclined an elderly but very handsome Moor, faultlessly arrayed in dark blue and white. This was no less a person than the Khalifa, and the shereef presented me. I expressed my thanks for civilities which we had received and my admiration for his town, and

we parted as we had met, with a long hand-clasp, suggestive of a Masonic grip. His hands, I noticed, were cared for like a woman's, soft and plump and well shaped. Many times after that I thought of the Scriptural phrase of greetings in the market-place; for I would meet the Khalifa often in my strolling through the town, and though I had no more words than "Salaamah," nor he than "Addio," we always met as friends, and I could see glances and gestures among the bystanders which made me feel my social position heightened.

The market-place within the walls struck me as more beautiful architecturally than anything in Tangier. It had, indeed, none of the richness in ornament which makes the great gateway to the mosques so exquisite in the more flourishing towns; that minute chiselling is a marvel of workmanship. I saw in Tangier an artist or craftsman at work on a wall cutting the plaster into the likeness of a honeycomb; the cells were chiselled two or three inches deep, and slanted upward so that the eye pierced into the depth of shadow. But, although at Laraiche there was no single splendour, the total effect was beautiful; for this oblong enclosure, perhaps a hundred yards in length was irregular in its lines: the two colonnades, with their rows of shops inside (Jews in the western, Moors in the eastern arcade), were charmingly proportioned, and it seemed to me an added beauty that the arcades were not parallel, but as you looked towards the gate of the citadel, they inclined towards each other. And in the far distance, near the gate, one perceived

another tiny arcade in which, on warm days, the Khalifa sat in judgment. The front of the citadel was of fine red brick, decorated with the commonest and most effective of Moorish devices for a frieze, crescent-shaped tiles set with the points alternately upwards and downwards, and overlapping so that two points met in the arc of each crescent. The colour of the tiles is always a dark green, which, after some exposure in the sun, takes a flecked gloss, like snake-skin. The same colour is always used to paint the heavy doors, patterned with heavy iron studs, which are a beautiful feature of Moorish streets, though nothing could more emphasise the exclusiveness of a Moorish interior.

Indeed, if the stricter sect had their way, it is not only from the houses that the European would be shut out. We spent our first night camped uncomfortably in the dirty market-place outside the walls; next day, by the Khalifa's invitation, we moved in and camped on the great Portuguese-built wall. Here we had been lodged a day or two, when one evening the shereef, returning with me, was stopped by a tall, white-robed figure. In a few minutes he joined me, explaining that this was the "holy man" of the town, who had come to express his displeasure at finding an infidel camped "on the wall of the holy fort." "But," added the shereef, "he says for my sake he will forgive you," not out of any personal kindness, let it be understood, but as a sign of respect due from one descendant of Muley Idris to another. Two or three days later we entered the café which my shereef frequented, the usual bare

carpeted room, with the tiny stove in one corner. Between this and the door giving on to the street stood a small table filling the whole wall (for the room lay parallel to the street), and on this table was the place of honour. It could hold three men at a pinch, and it held them now. One was a friend of ours, the captain of a lighter in the harbour, a shereef, and more than that, a hadji, one who has made the journey to Mecca. But my friend, Hadj Abdssalam, had made another journey—to London, no less—and had stayed there three months while his ship was discharging cargo and reloading: he had acquired a few phrases of English, and much London experience, and it delighted him to air both. A pleasanter, honester countenance than that of this Moorish sailor I have never seen. Ruddy rather than swarthy, he might have passed readily for a Biscayan, and cheerful good-humour beamed from every line of his bearded face. With him, as with so many Moors, the beard, never shaved, grew fine and silky, its short growth following and not concealing the lines from ear to chin. His clear blue eyes and tanned face spoke of the prime of condition: he had, indeed, the name of one of Laraiche's best seamen; but there was nothing hard or bony about his healthy vigour.

Very different was the man who sat on his right in the place of honour next the stove. Hadj Abdssalam was curled up, snug as a dormouse; his neighbour sat erect and stiff, rigid even in the loose folds of his white burnous. His complexion dark and bilious, his beard black and stiff, his eyes un-

smiling, his eyebrows raised and peaked, his cheekbones accentuated, all spoke the religious enthusiast; and this was, indeed, the holy man. My shereef greeted him, but when the greeting was received in silence, continued his conversation with yet another shereef (a common sailor, but receiving respect and precedence like the others). I leaned with my elbow on the table chatting with much friendship, but much difficulty, to Hadj Abdssalam, when suddenly the saint, without moving, began to speak in a loud, harsh, resonant voice; then, still continuing to declaim, he stretched out a bony hand and pointed it at me like a pistol.

People laughed throughout the room, Hadj Abdssalam chuckled quietly, and I asked my shereef what the saint was saying. "He says you belong to the fellowship of devils" was the version I got; but it must have been an abridged rendering, for the enthusiast spoke on louder and louder with brief pauses. His spittle ran on to his beard, his outstretched hand quivered as if in epilepsy; then suddenly he brought out from beside him a big ashen staff, and propping his two hands upon it, repeated twice a word which I knew the meaning of, "baráka, baráka (enough, it is enough)." Evidently, he did not mean that his discourse sufficed, for he went off again at score, and the shereef told me in undertones that he was heaping reproaches on the Sultan for leaning so much on Europeans. I asked my interpreter to say that the Sultan was young, and would learn better, but I was told that it "was not good to talk politics." To talk

politics in public you must be privileged, and the privileges of a holy man in this matter are unlimited. For a good quarter of an hour he declaimed fiercely, always with his finger like a pistol barrel at my head, against the new ways that had come into Morocco, against the Sultan, and against the shereef of Wazzan, who, in his judgment, had begun all the mischief. For this shereef, then the richest and most influential in Morocco, married an English-woman, and next procured protection for himself as a French subject.

It was as curious a display of fanatic oratory as one could see, and my interest in it was heightened by the ashen staff so near my head. But the assemblage, though they listened, changed nothing of their friendly aspect, and, to my surprise, punctuated the discourse with laughter. Often when I asked for a translation, my shereef would answer: "It is difficult to understand; he speaks what comes to his mouth." He declaimed, in fact, the riddling language of prophecy.

I found afterwards that without an audience he was less declamatory and less fierce. We came in one morning when he had the *café* to himself, and after some reluctance he was drawn into conversation, and interested himself in my movements so much that when my shereef took the cup of tea which he had ordered, the holy man stopped him. "Drink coffee," he said, "so the bar will become good for you." We substituted coffee at his bidding: I may add that the tea was not wasted, for the holy man drank it, in addition to the cup which we had already

provided. On no occasion did he show any unwillingness to smoke the unbeliever's cigarettes. But on this day he became positively friendly, invited me to become a dweller in Laraiche, and upon explanation that my most urgent desire was to get out of it, he undertook to go down and " shout " to the bar for me.

The bar is the governing feature of the life of Laraiche. With a good bar, steamers lie off, and the big lighters, with their fifteen oars a-side, ply busily ; the wharf is a scene of bustle, with sweating porters carrying bales and loading them on to mules, while placid officials sit statuesque in their draperies, ticking off items in an incongruously European note-book. With a bad bar the sea is vacant for days (for the coast is harbourless) except when there is some hope that the surf may abate; then, perhaps, steamers come down and wait forlornly, anxious to discharge their wares; but the captain of the port forbids any to attempt going out, and the Moorish boatmen acquiesce in great contentment. I was kept a prisoner long enough to realise how the conditions fell in with Moorish fatalism. No one could judge securely of the bar; only Allah knew, for indeed its motions depended on the weather in the North Atlantic, and showed often only the recoil after un-felt storms. But since Allah knew, no one cared to grumble except the two or three Europeans whose movements were thus obscurely impeded. And we sat and cursed at the roaring surf and resented the existence of a Government which would not dredge a channel to keep the port open.

The Moor, however, is free from all this itch of impatience. He desires no changes. Just as he has devised a costume which suits him, and remains constant to it through the centuries, exempt from fashion, so he has the kind of country that he desires, and leaves it as it is. If he is not content with the administration of justice, he steers clear of it so far as he can, and makes a proverb: " Beware of fire, water and the Government." If he finds travel difficult, he does not seek to build roads, he makes a proverb: " If wealth is to come, why go to seek it?" —since in any case Allah decides whether you shall be rich or poor. The one thing that will rouse him to activity is the fear of radical change—that is, the fear of the European. When I was in Laraiche, two bronze lions stood on the wharf, consigned from England to the Sultan, and they were a source of constant and bitter comment: for the law of the Prophet forbids graven images. Moors did not declaim against them, for " a shut mouth swallows no flies "; but they listened to the licensed speech of the holy man. If the Pretender (in those days of disputed sovereignty) wished to rouse an audience, he did not tell them of the exactions of the pashas; he showed them a picture of the Sultan riding a bicycle. Corrupt Governors are part of the recognised evils, but a Sultan who rides a bicycle and plays cricket is a threat to the established order, a man who may give Europe the keys of the holy fort. And when word went round that all men were to bring their rifles and the Sultan would pay for them, suspicion grew into certainty. The Sultan who

issued such an order was preparing to give his country over tied and bound to the European. "We will give up our wives rather," answered the mountaineers of Anjerá. They may probably before long have to fight unavailingly to maintain the freedom which they cherish—the right to shape their lives in their own way. Yet, if the order which they represent is barbarism, I do not know that civilisation will replace it for the better. In my ten days' stay at Laraiche, I saw no man drunk, heard no brawling, met with no courtesy—for I cannot blame a fanatic preacher for seeing in me a symbol of what he detested, and he answered courtesy with courtesy. And on the morning of my departure, when I stood at dawn on the deck of the little steamer in the river, and heard the muezzin's cry come vibrating through the clear air—the chant which, at that moment, ran through all the Eastern world—I could not but feel a sympathy for that religion which is at least believed in as scarcely any other by all its votaries. A friend of mine explained to his Moorish servant that the Japanese had no God. The boy laughed contemptuously: "Why," he said, "does their corn not grow?" It was as if you had asked him to believe that there was no sun in their sky.

A SUNDAY IN DONEGAL.

WE were late arriving at the old chapel, and the first thing that met us was the sight—less familiar, perhaps, in any other country than in Ireland—of worshippers kneeling outside the open door, unable to find room within. As we passed behind them, we could see the priest in his robes administering the Communion ; his figure was silhouetted against daylight, for the door in the south transept also was open, and beyond it the kneeling congregation overflowed on that side also under the sky. Between the priest and us was the huddled mass of women, who sat apart from the men. There was scarcely a hat among them. Shawls and handkerchiefs—red, orange, blue, purple, buff, and brown of every conceivable hue—made such a glow of rich and harmonious colour as you will only see in an Irish-speaking district, where the people still dress in a manner that visibly proclaims their nationality. A friend recognised me, and led us up into the gallery facing the chancel—there were three galleries, and all packed as closely as the seats on the floor. From here we could see the men, not wholly so distinctive in their dress as the women, yet for the most part clad in the rough home-spun, undyed, home-woven frieze. Look where you might, your eyes told you that you were in Ireland ; and I have never been in any other congregation anywhere which seemed to

offer such attractions to a painter. What the European countries generally sacrifice by choosing to wear far-off imitations of what is worn in London and Paris, cannot be counted.

But it was not the eye only that was affected by this evidence of national distinctness. If there be elsewhere congregations so rapt, I have not seen them. For a moment we felt shame at our intrusion, but the fear of having disturbed worship soon passed off ; it seemed as if an earthquake would hardly have broken the spell of that devotion. When the long succession of communicants was done with, the priest read the prayers after Mass, not in Latin nor in English, but in the Irish tongue of those he spoke to. Donegal-bred, he had the accent, at least to my unskilled ear ; but he was no native speaker, and when he preached it was in English. All that was needed was the tongue of the people to round off the impression of that discourse. As the young priest stood on the altar-steps, and the old men in their frieze stood by him, touching the very rail, it seemed not so much a religious office as some tribe council where debate was held on matters homely, yet weighty with significance. The Protestant Church, for all its bareness of ritual, has come far away from that primitive simplicity.

Another thing struck me then as never before, for all I have travelled about Ireland—the strength and the constant maintenance, through the church, of the local bond. As the priest disrobed before the sermon, he gave out subjects for prayer : “ You will say now a Pater Noster in Irish for all out of this

parish who are in America," "a Pater Noster and two Hail Marys for those who are in England or Scotland" (that parish is a great home of emigrant labour), "a Pater Noster and three Hail Marys in Irish for the dead that are in this churchyard." And the heavy rustle of the whispered prayer would go through the crowded transepts like the noise of leaves on a summer evening—bringing the dead and the far-away very near, it seemed, to those who then called them into memory. Never at any time in Ireland have I felt so remote from England, Scotland, and all the world as there at that Catholic service—so world-wide, yet so homely.

Outside the church door, when benediction ended and no one was left in the building but the school-master teaching children their catechism in Irish, a ritual more distinctive still was enacted. Perhaps fifty out of that immense congregation made their way into the churchyard, and stood for the most part chatting in a group round the monument to a departed priest. But a few women there detached themselves from the rest, and, each of them picking her way through the grass to a grave-stone or the little cross that marked a tomb still simpler, knelt down, and, bending forward, pressed her face close to the ground. Then—from the very earth it seemed—there rose a faint crying, hardly louder at first than a cricket's noise—swelling, dying down, swelling again, yet always so faint that out there in the open it was hardly audible ten yards off, unless one strained to hear it. But then a woman raised the chant from a grave just beside us; and, as one

listened to her cry near at hand, and the other faint wailings, all chanted to the same heartrending little tune, they seemed to fill all earth and heaven. It was like the cry, not of this or that wife or mother, but of the land itself—a voice issuing here from among the graves—the wailing of Ireland after her scattered sons. I have heard the keene before from many voices raised together at a funeral, but never elsewhere have I met this weekly renewing of the wail, this melancholy mingling of separate keenings, each mourning its own loss ; and it would break your heart to listen to it.

Away from the church was a very different gathering around the post-office, where men and women crowded and jostled as the postmaster read out names. Well they might look to the post, with the four or five hundred of their men away at the harvesting. It was all a part of the weekly re-union, when these mountaineers and fisher folk gathered from many miles around have sight and speech of one another. The week centres round Sunday. The church is the meeting point of life for a whole countryside ; and I think the rest of us, not Catholics, who care for Ireland, when we are brought face to face with the Catholic Church at such times and in such places, must feel towards it almost as if it was our own, because it is so deeply interwoven with all the life that is most Irish in Ireland.

SILK OF THE KINE.

THERE is a curious aloofness about cows. All the other animals which man has tamed, man has petted, and the animals, apparently, have liked it and responded. If there be anything in the tie of fosterage, cows ought to have a place in our affections not far from the highest, for to most of us (now-a-days) they replace our mothers. Yet, I see no sign of recognition, whether in man or cow. Perhaps man is restrained by a sense of the extreme indecency, the horror even, which would ensue if at some later day he should dine off her members whom once he regarded as his foster-mother; since nothing less than this pricks through the callous hide of our carnivoracity. We let our children make pets of lambs—and very pretty pets they are; but how we can look either child or lamb in the face passes, or should pass, human comprehension. At all events, whatever be the reason, in some obscure way the relations between man and cow-beasts differ from those which link us to dog or cat, horse or donkey. Pigs, beneath an unprepossessing exterior, often conceal, when they are at liberty, discriminating affections—and disinterested, since the object is often not the dispenser of food. A pig attached itself to Sir Walter Scott, and gambolled about him whenever it was able to; and I knew an old gentleman in the North of Ireland who was constantly escorted about

his farm by a lean and formidable monster of the greyhound type. Yet I never heard that even Sir Walter received tokens of attachment from either cow or calf.

Dogs and cats are, of course, in nine cases out of ten mere pensioners on our affections ; we keep them for friends, for companions, or for the luxury of touch and eye, to caress and be caressed. Your horse, your donkey are beasts of service, no doubt, but how easily relations of affection with them are established ! They will whinny to you, almost talk to you by sound, they will welcome you by gesture ; it is part of their nature. One sight is for ever printed on my memory (I do not know in what county, nor even in what country, whether England or Ireland)—a big dray-horse lumbering along a road, walking unled, and the carter, heavy and lumbering as he, walking beside on a raised foot-path. I can still see the sudden, ungainly movement with which the big head and neck reached out sideways, and nuzzled heavily against the man's arm ; and I can hear the rough, all but laughing tenderness of the carter's voice, “ Give over, you old fool.” No cow that ever I saw or heard of bestows on any human being any such endearment. And yet among themselves they are prodigal of caresses. Watch them in a field. The prettiest thing I have seen since I owned a few acres was the sight of twin calves, beautifully made and marked, which, until they were almost full yearlings, never grazed two yards apart, never lay but touching one another's flanks.

There must be some curious intimate barrier which

separates our race from theirs at the gateway where between us and the other domestic animals communications pass so easily by touch. And yet how close the words are—kine and kin! In a true sense, none of the kindly beasts are so near to us, for none have such need of our ministrations. Sheep yean unaided; but when a cow is in labour, it is as if you tended on a human being, patient, responsive, gentle, grateful for help. And what a picture it is of maternity—the mother-beast's wild-eyed wonder and triumph over the wet new-born thing that you sprinkle with meal, so that her great tongue, sweeping over it like a scythe through grass, may feed herself while she thinks only to lick her youngling dry. There is a queer, high-pitched lowing uttered over the new-born calf, excited and almost tremulous, distinct from any sound heard from cattle at other times, and strangely moving. It has exultation in it—exultation over the thing born, far more than the joy of deliverance. The man (or the woman) who could put that note into a poem would write what has not been written yet.

And in truth, for all the separation that I speak of, primitive humanity recognises the closeness of the bond. No peasant in the West of Ireland will give his daughter in marriage without giving a heifer with her; it is part of the family life, vital to the home. Again, a man's worth is most primitively stated by the number of cattle that he owns—they are "personality" in the fullest sense. That is recognised, too, in a horrible way, by primitive savagery; cattle maiming is more than a mere doing

of injury, it is an insult, an indignity, as though the man were mutilated himself. Literally, this is true, since, whenever such things happen in Ireland (rarely now, thank God), those who maim know perfectly well, that the owner will be compensated to the value, and more than the value, at the public charge.

Another aspect of the same fact—this sense of extended personality—is the Irishman's passion for owning cattle; and it is another aspect which leads to trouble. I could name half a dozen successful merchants in Connaught, whose business is more than sufficient to occupy their whole time, but who, none the less, persist in coupling it with speculation in live-stock. As a shrewd observer put it, they would waste half of any day running after the tail of a bullock. To be a judge of beasts is the most reputed connoisseurship; to buy and sell skilfully the supreme triumph. A man will come back from the market with the glow of victory on his face because he has got a pound more than was looked for in a bargain. The exhilaration of these contests is the one thing known that will make early risers of Irishmen. I came from Galway some weeks ago, on a fair day, leaving at six in the morning, and the train was full of people who had already transacted their day's business; the fair was virtually over.

All this gambling in live-stock (for it is a gamble, and the cattle-market in Dublin, a wonderful sight, is to our city what the Exchange is to London) does not show the pleasantest side of the relation between man and beast. Apart from the question of man

versus bullock in Ireland, it is only on the little farms that cattle are treated as members of the family. On the great ranches they are almost wild; on the big dairy-farms each cow is only one milk-producing unit, and the calves live or die very much at a venture. Out of half-a-dozen heifers that I bought in a bunch, one was unlike the others, gentle and friendly. "You would know it on her," said my man to me; "that one was brought up tied to a bed-post." In truth, kine and kin are very close in Ireland; it was not for nothing that the lovely word of praise, "Silk of the Kine," originated among us. And of all modern artists who have painted cattle, the one who most felt their beauty, the large dignity of cows, the exquisite fineness of line in young beasts, the softness that subdues the angular shape of calves, was Walter Osborne, whose early death robbed the world of more than the world knew, and Ireland of far more than Ireland could afford to lose.

FAREWELL TO THE LAND.

(*December, 1910*).

IT is Christmas Eve in London, and, outside the window, traffic grinds through black slush. This morning, as I walked through Kensington Gardens, not a sign of growth was to be seen save for two forlorn little shrubs, judas-trees of a sort, which put out shamefacedly a bespattered frill of white blossom. Yet, six weeks ago, in the garden that I have said good-bye to, daffodil spikes were already shot three inches high, preparing for the spring; and the last flowers I gathered in it were a basketful of roses, sweet-pea, and mignonette—not radiant summer blossoms assuredly, but still beautiful, still fragrant, even in November. And were I there to-day, now in the very deadness of the year, I could find a nose-gay out of doors—violets, of course, but also bits of wallflower—periwinkle, too, and certainly the garden primroses, pink, yellow, and crimson, that bloom all through the cold months in that sunny corner. People may talk as they will of Ireland's rainy weather; I know of no place in these islands where December and January give more hours of sun and clear soft air than in the tract of coast which stretches north and south of Dublin from Wicklow to the Boyne. The plain of Fingal, lying north of the city along the sea, is as good a place to garden in as man could discover; and consequently it is scattered over

with old walled-in spaces that have been gardens for many generations, but never more skilfully tended than to-day. Our neighbours shamed us with their connoisseurship, their choice blooms, their artfully combined effects. Only one distinction was peculiar to our garden, and we deserved no credit for it—the quaint arrangement of an oval wall, into which the house was set, so that the long curves of mellow brickwork enclosing that acre of sunny southward-sloping ground sprang from either hand as you looked out of window.

My mind goes back on it all with a very sharp regret; it can recall the place of every plant, it thinks of the changes made, and to the day of my death I shall be sorry not to have watched the growth of a mulberry and a tulip-tree that I planted in the plot where a huge old monkey-puzzle was bleeding itself to death in a thick flow of resinous sap. But, after all, it was not the garden—not, at least, the flower-garden—that I found it hard to say good-bye to. It was the surroundings; it was the whole way of life. That November day when I took my farewell bouquet with me into Dublin was a day of soft sun, flying clouds, and shining sea; and as the tram carried me citywards, running along the lagoon which separates Dollymount sandhills from the shore, I watched for the thousandth time the graceful shapes and swift movement of the running shorebirds and waders, redshank, oyster-catcher, snipe, and curlew. Their flight, their attitudes, were a perpetual interest along those great expanses of cockle-breeding shore, over which lay in tracts a film

of green weed, most beautiful in the evening light—more beautiful even than was the water itself when it covered all with its pale sheet of blue. Linnets haunted that shore, too, in droves, coming to feed on the red weed; and I have watched bird-trappers at work with their snap-nets in the marshy fields when the poor song-birds came to drink the fresh water after their salt feedings.

Near as we were to a great city, there was a great variety of bird-life: duck of all sorts, especially sheldrake—sometimes a dozen of the great, handsome creatures, easy to approach, since the fowlers let them alone; and I have seen geese passing. In the fields about the house, boys could spend long hours stalking curlew and green plover, with a chance now and then of flushing snipe, or even woodcock, out of the ditches in time of frost. All the smaller birds were abundant: blackbirds and thrushes so many that I had to beg old herring-nets from friends in Donegal and Galway to save the fruit; and then life was embittered by finding the creatures tangled in the meshes—screaming and biting when one came to let them go. Bullfinches used to come often, and I have seen both the gold-crested and the fire-crested wren, attracted by a long range of conifers. In the little stream at the bottom of the garden a moorhen built, and more than once I have seen a kingfisher flash by. For some reason the cuckoo never came our way; but corncrakes we heard too much, and I have had a better look at them there than ever anywhere else—queer, ungainly objects in the open, shame-faced till they could make

their way into the grass, diving snake-wise for cover.

Before boys took to shooting them, the curlew used to be up constantly through winter on the big lawn, stalking solemnly, and then with equal solemnity driving their great scimitar beaks into the sod. But the loveliest of all bird-visions that I saw there used to be in summer evenings when half the lawn was deep in hay, and the moths were out over it. For then suddenly the twilight would be filled with white wings a-flutter and a-poise, dipping, swooping, checking, as the little black-head gulls hawked for the rising insects. They came in fifties and in hundreds, and over the long, swaying stretch of green—flecked itself with pale blossom—their white flutterings wove an amazing web of beauty.

Yet, “it is not beauty I demand,” not beauty only that I miss, that I feel banished from, since I drifted back into the ranks of the town-dwellers: it is the control and ownership of land, the care of its growing produce. In the garden I am sure my greatest pleasure came from the apple-trees: not only because the apple seems to me among fruits what the herring is among fishes—the cheapest, the most accessible, and the best of all—but because the apple-gathering was a kind of harvest, an operation of some thought and care. My last days in the place were charmed and embittered by it. There was the keen pleasure, as always, of handling the fruit, stretching this way and that from the ladder, delightfully occupied for hours in the sweet, clean air; and there was also the keen stab of knowledge that very probably in my lifetime I should never again be the master of apple-

trees. That sense of ownership, of a personal tie, is very strong, though very absurd : for what was I to the trees ? I had not planted them, nor pruned them ; yet it seemed to me, gathering the green globes that held there so handsome on the long branches, they would never have swelled so happily and prosperously save in a kind of response to care. This last was a bad apple-season with us, as with everyone, and eating-apples were far to seek ; but the big kitchen sorts were a crop to brag of, so even were they in their perfection. My latest gathering was of a few that had been left on the highest boughs ; there were nine apples, and they weighed over seven pounds—filling me with a pride of achievement such as I have long ceased to take, for instance, in any output of my pen.

But much stronger was my interest in the tiny farm—just what we call nowadays an economic holding, big enough to support a man and his family : some ten Irish acres, but of very good land. It is better land to-day than when we took it over ; and odd it is for me to think how reluctantly I was forced into a responsibility which became the most delightful occupation of my middle age. Farming never attracted me as a boy, although there was a farm attached to the country rectory where I was bred ; and my first instinct when I got control of fields was to sub-let them to a dairyman. But soon it became apparent that the need to respect his growing grass was a nuisance, and the big mobs of cattle, which he put on for a fortnight at a time to eat all bare, were a worse nuisance when pasture

began to fail them ; so I consented to keep cows. The two men whom we employed had, of course, that passion for dabbling in cattle which is bred in every Irish countryman, and they succeeded in implanting it even in me.

What there should be so fascinating in watching over the growth of beasts I cannot rightly imagine—especially where one is dealing only with the commonest sort of cattle, with no pretensions to show-qualities. The only test of success lay in final prices : and there the battle was generally fought, as the moment to risk our fortunes was also decided, by my men, not by me. Still, the pleasure of daily inspection grew to be mine—most leisurely of pleasures—and towards the end of my experiences I was sometimes dragged into the fray of bargaining, and began to taste its feverish joy. Perhaps it was only a species of vanity, since I never felt myself so plainly risen in good men's esteem as on a day when I succeeded in securing some twenty shillings more than the limit which was indicated as probable. These were the events—the great moments. But, after all, what really made the occupation was planning out the partition into meadow and pasture, selling at such times as to deal profitably with one's store of hay, experimenting with fertilisers, and so forth.

It was of no mean interest to observe how very conservative is the farming type if left to its own devices. My head-worker was not only a skilled gardener, but a man of first-rate general intelligence : yet on a farm his tendency was to do all as he had seen it done from boyhood. Where his training told

was in prompt recognition of facts. He was very sceptical about artificial grass-manures till he had tried one; but when the result came, against his prophecies, he did not fail to show me how its benefit extended even into a second year. He scouted the idea of a one-horse plough till it was forced on him; but after a year's use of it on the acre that we kept in tillage, he told me that it had nearly saved its total cost. Still, every innovation was a fight, and because I happened always to be away from home when potatoes had to be planted, planted they always were in the old-fashioned way, from cut sections, not sprouted, and often from inferior seed. Nor could I persuade him to spray the plants, as is done to-day in Ireland everywhere that the potato-crop is a man's main dependence. I was referred to the example of our neighbours—first-rate farmers, too, in all but their neglect of this precaution. We got our lesson, though we did not get time to profit by it, when the wet summer of 1910 left us with blackened stalks before July was half over. One of my last experiences was the farmer's sense of personal disgrace when I went to help the men dig out a few early drills, and found every second potato an ugly rotten mass. I remembered how the year before, as we worked side by side there in the crumbling earth, my gardener had broken silence with one of his rare expressions of pleasure: "Any man would be pleased digging spuds like them," he said, as he opened up, perhaps, the twentieth root in succession, with its full complement of clean, even-sized, shapely tubers.

I am sorry we ended with a failure. But nevertheless we sold the produce of that acre (over and above the potatoes which kept our household going till November) for fifteen pounds, and we sold to a farmer who bought most of the crop in the ground. At any rate, my few years' experience made living and real to me the belief that land tilled is more profitable than land left to grow grass at its own sweet will; and that is a fundamental proposition, which, I think, every legislator in these countries ought to be forced to verify, or confute, for himself.

Another discipline that I would put into that school for politicians which exists in my Utopia is the experience of manual labour. Gentlemen talk airily about an eight hours' or a ten hours' day; but do they know what it means? I have heard able editors declaring that they themselves wished greatly they could get off with an eight hours' shift: I have even heard members of Parliament declaring that their Parliamentary labours (save the mark) are often extended beyond that limit—as if that had something to do with the matter! It would really be a great and blessed thing if every educated man knew by bodily experience what it meant to dig eight hours and get half a crown for it.

The learner would have to be taken early. No man of middle age could, I think, do a reasonable day's spade-work without going near to kill himself, unless he had been broke to it in boyhood. But even a couple of hours, or better still, the task which an ordinary labourer will accomplish in two hours, would teach a man what labour means, and should,

if he is a decent man, teach him to feel that sense of inferiority which the swimmer inspires among those who must drown if they fall in. Yet, like all the valuable moral lessons which life brings, this one is only acquired incidentally. Shooting and fishing develop the knack of observation, but would scarcely do so in a man who shot or fished, so to say, in cold blood, with an ulterior motive. The admirable effects of working beside working men are likelier to come if you do not go to seek for them.

Perhaps I am wrong : zest in the thing done need not be necessary to learning by the doing of it. But this much I know—that by owning a farm, by having a voice in the working of it, by putting my hand to all the elementary activities, I did find myself brought nearer to the central facts of life, and nearer to the men I employed. Comradeship was established. Also, I put my hand to the tasks because they tempted me, just like sailing a boat, managing a horse, or any of the other things that men normally do for sport ; and I found, if not sport in them, at least pleasure. It was not indeed that drunkenness of happy physical exertion which Tolstoi has described in a famous chapter ; that can come only to the young and the very strong, and then scarcely except in the harvest, which is a kind of carnival of the year. But still, there was a pleasure of bodily exertion which entirely relaxed and rested the mind, and seemed to bring an added self-respect, as one learnt mastery over some of those ordinary businesses

of early civilised man which have dropped out of our too complex development.

It was curious, too, to observe how partial is that training of the body through the routine of games which most of us undergo. Such muscles as are needed to swing an axe I found tolerably sufficient—but perhaps only because I had learnt the knack as a boy. I could work a cross-cut saw as long as my men, but to sever a branch the thickness of my leg with a handsaw would fatigue me horribly. A pick was, like an axe, no trouble to use; but one soon found that the jar brought on a deadly nerve-tiredness, hard to get rid of. But where absolute inferiority showed itself was in all the work that taxed spine and loins—digging or shovelling. And it is not simply physical strength that the novice lacks: what distinguishes the good work is the swing or rhythm by which he always saves himself the dead lift. Nothing looks simpler than shovelling gravel into a cart, but if you try along with a workman you will find the difference in results, and (if you are observant) will perceive and correct the difference of method. More skilled forms of labour, such as building a hayrick, no amateur can hope to acquire; even pitching hay off a cart is most baffling to a beginner. But I honestly pride myself in the belief that, working for three or four hours at a stretch, I was worth, at our local rates, say, fourpence an hour; and it saddens me beyond words to reflect that this gift is now locked up, useless and perishing.

Still, something has entered into me which was not there before. I am free of certain communions

not accessible to the uninitiated : I have realised the pleasure which a labourer experiences in seeing a good crop and in harvesting it, and the added and different pleasure of feeling that the crop you harvest is your own. Whether a town-bred man, coming to that life in middle age as I did, would learn what I learnt is a question : the education in all country lore must begin early, though a countryman can make himself a very sufficient Londoner in ten or a dozen years. How to set out if you lack all such country knowledge as one cannot remember learning—if, for instance, you cannot distinguish the various trees ? Yet it is only of late that I learnt something of the grain of woods, how thorn is the best for burning, how a poplar log clogs the saw but will split for a mere impulse of the axe, and so on. And in learning these things, I learnt above all to respect the inherited knowledge of a countryside, the wisdom of a good outdoor labourer. My gardener could readily and effectually put his hand to painting and glazing ; when we needed to build a small room he knew how to shape a slate, how to roughcast a wall, just as naturally as he knew how to set a saw or sharpen a scythe. In our intercourse I began to realise what a training is the countryman's life. "Sure any man that had hands on him could do that," was a phrase that I heard many a time when we discussed this or that job a little off the regular lines—fixing wire fences, laying a pipe to carry water-supply to the field where our cattle were, and the like. And I saw, too, how out of this general resourcefulness there grows a natural quick adaptability.

An old water-ram supplied the garden, and it was out of gear when we came; it never was really in order, yet year in and year out this countryman kept it going by constant tinkering at the tricky machinery, and at the control of the sluices. On the land you learn to do things for yourself, and not be calling in the specialist. Add to this a general knowledge of rough leechcraft for beasts, partly traditional, partly acquired, like all the workingman's knowledge, by watching the skilled man and noting his methods in a memory which has never been spoilt by a dependence on the written word: in that way you get some notion of the country-bred type—which in England is perishing from among you.

Once I was struck with the limitation which habits of depending on machinery had bred even in countrymen. To work our little rotation, we grew now and then small strips of oats, no larger than what you see in Connemara, and we had missed our chance of catching the threshing-machine which travelled round the farms of that neighbourhood. I came home, found rats devouring the unthreshed corn, and wrote to the county of my own upbringing for a couple of flails. Not one of the three hands whom I then had could handle the flails properly—to the huge contempt of a strapping lass who came from where the flails did, and who set to work with a will for the men's instruction. I thanked my stars that I had learnt that particular knack long years ago in those far-off hills of Donegal, and so escaped her frank derision.

One thing more. Living on the land gave me

full confidence (if indeed I ever lacked it) not merely to deny, but to ridicule and spit upon an opinion which often enough is put forward. A "gentleman" (to speak by the card), it is said, lowers himself in the eyes of working people if he puts his hand to servile labour. God help us all, if that were so! For my own part, though it had become natural for my men to send for me without more ado when an extra hand was needed in any sudden pressure, and to save up things which needed extra help till I should be available, no one ever got more ungrudging service or better value for wages paid; and I think I got more than service, as certainly I gave more than wages. I think our liking and respect were mutual. If to-day we breed "class-conscious Socialists"—that is because yearly fewer of us, gentle and simple, live together on the land.

Old-fashioned cotton-spinners and millowners used to insist that their sons should put in their period of apprenticeship, working beside the hands; and it seems that this practice is dropping into disuse. If so, the separateness of class life is being increased here also. When gentlemen farmed their own land, there was a natural give-and-take between employer and employed which developed the human bond far more than it emphasised the class distinction. And, pathetically enough, those who seem most anxious to develop the peasant life anew, the votaries of small holdings, are town-bred men. In English politics, the Radical party, more especially in the younger generation, seems to be that group which has lost touch most completely with the land. Mr.

Walter Long (my ideal of an English politician, if it were not for his opinions), and on the other side Sir Edward Grey, are almost the only statesmen who strike me, not merely as lacking the town-bred compassion for the yokel, but as possessing the countryman's far more deeply seated contempt for the ignorance of townsfolk. Such men alone are fitted to understand and to help the field labourer, who is, to my thinking, of all labourers the least mechanically minded, and, under favourable conditions, the best-educated man.

At all events, what I find, analysing my own consciousness and setting down the result for students of such things, is that five years living upon the land, in charge of land, leaves me altered, and, I hope, enriched. It is with a sense of incompleteness, as though I lacked henceforward something natural to man's proper development, and to a reasonable life, that I have said, for a period anyhow, farewell to the land.

I leave this essay as I wrote it. Too much has happened since, and we know too little what will result, for me to attempt any readjustment.

MEN AND THEIR WORK.

"Every man to his job. If it's really your job you will like it. You must; you can't help it. God made men so."

So says, in Mr. Locke's novel, the serious and single-minded person who helps a humorist (Simon the Jester) out of the quagmire into which jesting has led him. The sentence brought back sharply to my mind a conversation which had surprised and a little saddened me. Everybody turns up, sooner or later, on the terrace of the House of Commons, and it was my chance to meet there that veteran of letters, Mr. W. D. Howells. He was talking of his journey—a slow crossing, but he had brought some editorial work along with him. "Just enough to be a pleasure," I said. "Ah," he replied, "is work ever a pleasure?" "No," struck in another man at the table, "it is always a slavery." I appealed to Mr. Howells. "I know what he means," he said. "I've done that kind of work. When? At the printer's case."

I remembered then that the famous novelist had printed books before he wrote them. "But," said I, "do you mean that all manual labour of that class is disagreeable?" "I certainly found it so," he said. The other man was more emphatic. "You may take it from me, out of my own experience, that

all the hands in all factories are simply counting the minutes till the clang of the bell."

Now, it is quite clear to me that both these men, who by their own determination and ability rose out of manual labour, disliked it because they were conscious that it was not "their job" (in Mr. Locke's phrase), and equally clear that when once Mr. Howells had got to his own job he did it with pleasure. Nothing would persuade me that he did not enjoy writing about Silas Lapham, just as the artist really enjoys painting a successful picture—lacking only the artist's almost physical pleasure in the actual handling of his tools. But how about the others—those who do not rise out of manual labour or whatever other form of employment may be considered as a drudgery?

For this is the real question raised in my mind by Mr. Howells and his friend: Under modern conditions, do men, as a rule, dislike the work they have to do? Is the world full of factory hands whose only interest in the working hours is to anticipate the end of them? It is a very grave question for society, and I, knowing little of industrial life, the prevalent type in modern communities, can only suggest a few considerations as to the answer.

In the first place, there is no drudgery, intellectual or physical, that men will not face with appetite if it is "their job." Upon this I wholly agree with Mr. Locke. I have seen scholars go near to kill themselves in collating texts, spending long hours comparing with infinite minuteness two copies of the same manuscript, and engrossed by their task to the

point of forgetting food, sleep, rest, everything ; and this without hope of reward, without any real thought of reputation. Again, I have seen an Irish peasant (lazy enough over his proper business about a house and yard) turn to when he got spade or pickaxe in hand, and work as if a demon possessed him, in sheer love of feeling his muscles and seeing the work (in an expressive Gaelic phrase) "put from him." But I suppose that if the scholars I speak of had looked forward to nothing else but collating manuscripts all their lives, if the Kerry boy had been going to dig all his days, they would have gone about their tasks without much gusto. Variety is needed to maintain interest. On a farm (where scythes are still used) mowing is admittedly the most exhausting labour ; yet Tolstoi, in a famous chapter of "*Anna Karénina*," has shown with truth as well as beauty how it is a kind of festival employment, gone about in gaiety of heart. No one can have worked with harvesters and not felt something of the spirit of a game or a battle in that yearly rush of labour. But the operative in a cotton mill, I fancy, knows no seasons ; there is no completion of a stage, no feature in the work. Or is there ? Can a man identify himself with his job ?—that is the test. Can he interest himself in it as undoubtedly a farm labourer does in the growing and gathering of a field of potatoes which he has helped to set, though whether the crop be good or bad makes no difference to his wage ? Save on these conditions the worker can have no pride in his work, and when you kill a man's pride in his job, nothing is left but a slavery.

I can readily imagine a workman taking pride through the whole of his life in making boots; indeed, no artist has ever talked to me with more enthusiasm of his own craft than a skilled bootmaker. I can understand a cobbler cobbling continually to the end of his days, for every boot to be patched offers a new problem. But to spend one's life tending a machine which punches out this or that part of a boot is a very different story. Doubtless a man can reconcile himself to mere mechanical labour if through industry there is a chance of promotion. Yet even this, the poorest of all inducements, is often lacking: the worker is held to duty by bare necessity, by the fear of losing his job—which is his job only because he happens to have got it, which a thousand others could do exactly in the same way and with exactly the same prospects. Such men do not and cannot like work, and, often through no fault of their own, they are a canker on society.

Again, the man who likes work of a certain kind may not like too much of it. My Kerry lad would have dug twelve hours any day for a wager or on an emergency. But if offered high pay for ten hours' digging daily he would very likely have thrown up his job after a time—exhibiting that improvidence of the working classes which prudent gentlemen declaim against in Parliament and elsewhere.

Now, of course, the work on a farm is a year's long series of different operations, some revoltingly laborious, others even pleasurable. Such work is human, and it dignifies. But there are and probably must be in factories thousands of tasks which pre-

clude the idea of pleasure or interest to the worker. Modern life with its specialisation has produced a monotony unknown in the older, simpler, yet far more varied world. Ideally speaking—that is, with a view to the advantage of the State and the race—the performance of such tasks should be strictly limited in time and the pay high. There ought to be leisure to compensate for the tedium and money to give chances. Any form of work which has possibilities of advancement in it may be likeable, even lovable, if not for itself, then for what can be seen growing out of it—marriage, the adornment of a home, the means of education. The ideal State is one in which every man will have the chance of finding “his job”—the work which he must like because “God made man so”: and in which there will be as few as possible of those tasks which almost inevitably condemn workers to be for ever “counting the minutes till the clang of the bell.”

IRISH BOOK LOVERS.

IRELAND is so small a province of the world, that even in the greater Ireland, which has no sea boundaries or land frontier, all workers are familiarly knit together by a common recognition of each other's existence. A friend is there, or an opponent, whom you may have never met; but at least you are aware of him, you are linked by a fellow-feeling, by no means limited to those of one purpose or party. He may be wrong headed, he may be a pestilent nuisance; but after all he is a part of Ireland.

This intimacy of attitude may be intelligible only to those who share the life of a small nationality; but even Anglo-Saxons and the other uninitiate (God help them) can conjecture how this tie of fellowship heightens the peculiar friendliness inspired by a sympathetic personality diffusing itself over anonymous print. Such a friendly personality I find in the directing genius of the friendliest publication that I know—one wholly concerned with the interests of Ireland, and destitute of a single aversion. It would be cold praise to say that the "*Irish Book Lover*" is no respecter of persons; it respects any person, provided that he or she is Irish, and any book, so long as it has to do with Ireland. At first sight this little green-covered monthly (but does it appear with any mechanical subservience to the calendar?—I doubt it) seems no better than a scrap-heap of notes

and queries, odd excerpts from some uncompiled catalogue, shreds of dry-as-dust erudition, flung confusedly into one bundle; yet the whole thing lives; it radiates personality. When I come on it among a mass of circulars, pamphlets, and other such dead printed matter, it is like the sudden greeting of a friend. Even its advertisements have this vital quality; they differ from other advertisements as a good bookseller's shop differs from other shops; they are a challenge to conversation, an invitation to loiter rather than to be brief. I wonder if they can possibly be paid for!

Irish people are very odd about books. They are, and every Irish writer knows it to his cost, the least book-buying of publics. We, who write of Ireland, labour like the peasant proprietor in his hayfield, under a wholesome cloudy sky, earning our diet of potatoes and buttermilk, though unhappily often in places where buttermilk, at least, is nohow to be come by; and we have always leisure, since the day is long from dawn to sunset, for passing the time of day with our neighbours. Our occupation is effectually shielded from the glare and glamour of commercialism, and, no doubt, so much the better for our virtue. The Irish Literary Theatre earns a great deal of praise, some kicks, and possibly a few half-pence: "Bunty" comes along and makes a fortune. Miss Barlow was exempt from the temptation to over-production which must have made turmoil in the souls of Ian Maclarens and Mr. Crockett. Mr. Yeats has done more than any man living, perhaps than any man living or dead, to raise the fame of

Ireland in the craft of letters ; but heaven help Mr. Yeats—heaven help any of us—if existence depended on the sale of books to the Irish public. Yet Ireland is a country of book-lovers : the man for whom books are a passion and a treasure is perhaps commoner there than anywhere in the world. Let me recall some of the Irish book-lovers I have known.

A blind old man living in the steep street of a Norman-Irish town : in an old borough with memories of Gael and Gall, planter and supplanted, serf and master, monk and Cromwellian, Croppy and Yeo—memories that he had studied, traditions that he had collected, all through a long life ; and there beside him in the little sanded kitchen were stacked the volumes of his most cherished possession—all the proceedings of the Irish Parliament. Yet his days were unhappy because a careless generation disrespected his books ; because his gathered hoard was scattered by the children ; because even the great volumes, richly bound, were—so he feared, and not without reason—torn and abused. I was to send him a book of my editing, dealing with the scenes he knew best ; he thanked me, but was half inclined to weep, forecasting the difficulties he would have in preventing its loss in the intervals between those hours when one or another might read it aloud to him. He has gone to his rest now, and maybe his apprenticeship as clerk to the local poor law board has qualified him for some pleasant task on that section of the Recording Angel's staff which deals with the deeds done and suffered in Ireland.

Another figure rises in my mind, far away west in Connemara, in the "next parish to America"—a retired schoolmaster, having a name ancient in that region as the dawn of history, and fitly, therefore, a master of the Gaelic tongue and its printed records: an authority to whom scholars all over Europe referred on points of grammar, of usage, even of detailed historic fact. His tiny shelves were laden with volumes of price, gifts many of them, inscribed with illustrious names, and yet standing by others which must have been purchased at a cost that might well have seemed beyond the means of any who dwelt in that remote cottage; and all were guarded like the apples of the Hesperides. Yet for those in whom the guardian discerned a genuine love of knowledge, no dragon had to be circumvented: books and his skill in them were alike freely at command.

Richer in books, not less rich in courtesy and scholar's generosity, was one whose loss left us all impoverished—Caesar Litton Falkiner, a true Irish bibliophile, but happily endowed with what too many of our erudite have lacked. He had the *lucidus ordo*, the faculty for sifting and arranging, for selecting the relevant fact out of his store; he was a good writer as well as a good reader. Often our best book-lovers have produced some *magnum opus* whose bulk is crammed with a hotchpotch where shape or outline is none; and a subject like the "History of the Irish Brigade," fit to provide a hundred romances, becomes merely an impenetrable thicket of intertangled detail. Some such defect in architectonic quality, some such lack of binding power, robbed the

world of what another Irishman might have given to it. Those of us who knew W. J. Craig knew him as a passionate devourer of books, yet least of all men a bookworm. He had drawn the very essence out of all the Elizabethan and Jacobean literature. For half a lifetime he laboured, with toil like a miner's, to bring into the light a glossary of the Elizabethan English; yet for want of the simplest, almost the mechanical, aptitude of a writer's craft he never accomplished anything. These are a few names at random. But which of us all who have tried to familiarise ourselves with the life and history of Ireland would not write of some one man, or more likely of several, as in this number of the "*Irish Book Lover.*" Mr. G. R. M. Dix writes of Mr. Robert Pillow, recently deceased in Armagh :—"Mr. Pillow was a storehouse of knowledge regarding the archæology and history of Armagh, and during a long life had collected many scarce books and newspapers printed there, and to him I was indebted for much information." So would I have been, if I had only known of his existence some ten years ago. Let me suggest to Irish book-lovers that what we want most is a directory of book-lovers in Ireland. And to all book-lovers in Ireland or out of Ireland, let me commend "*The Irish Book Lover,*" which proceeds from the Irish Literary Society of London, through the medium of Hanna and Neale, Dublin booksellers, and themselves no mean lovers of books.

ENGLISH AND IRISH GARDENS.

I HAVE been seeing latterly a number of English gardens, in a county where flowers abounded more than is common even in England. I saw and admired, yet always with a half-heartedness that I could not wholly account for, till gradually it dawned on me that the better the gardening—from a certain point of view—the less I liked it; and when at last I went to see a kinswoman who lives not far from London, I understood. Her garden, though in the heart of Essex, though tended by an Englishman who had scarcely moved from his native county, was yet an Irishwoman's garden. In it I felt at home, and what made me feel at home was the sense of leisure and of elbow-room. Nothing had been attempted which could not be produced without the appearance of effort.

A few rose-beds—perfectly tended—were here and there on the lawn; one set piece (so to say), a kind of mound banked with tiers of flowers, asters and so forth, made a formal centre; but the formality was mitigated by a huge bushy clump, some distance beyond it, of a free-flowering crimson rose, left to shoot and tangle at its own sweet will. In the garden itself the walks ran between borders—here a space given over wholly to stocks, still heavy with scent and colour even in September; elsewhere Michaelmas daisies with a rosebush every now and then

interspersed ; then, again, sunflowers ; and, again and again, little hedges of sweet-pea. One could enjoy each flower in its own right ; and, above all, it was a place where one could gather freely and not feel that the garden was the poorer. In English gardens there are places where you can cut flowers ; in Irish there are none where you cannot. That seems to sum the difference, or at least to indicate its nature.

For the common aim of all the English gardens which I have visited was a scheme of colour—varied, interwoven, but essentially compact. I remember one effect where a green path ran between two borders, terminated at each end by a rose-grown archway ; and the whole on either side was a dazzle of colour, flower against flower. Yet since one's attention was fixed upon the whole, the flowers lost their individuality ; for, if they had been left to develop freely, the symmetry must have suffered ; here one kind would have crowded out its neighbour, there another. The result is that I remember a vision of brightness, but I have no clear picture ; I cannot recall what the flowers were that made up the scheme. But I can see, as if I were standing before it, the gorgeous scarlet *tropæolum* which flung itself up and over many yards of a tall holly-hedge. That was to me the jewel of the garden ; yet all it needed was to be let alone. Those wonderful borders could be maintained in their perfection only by constant interference—by watchful, costly efforts ; and it is a fact that very few Irish people can afford this kind of thing.

As I came back from visiting another of these flower displays, where sunflower, dahlia, gladiolus, an-

mone japonica, and half a score of other blooms were packed into one bewildering border—not massed but elaborately distributed after a preconceived idea—I passed a new little villa, outside which was another border, which brought my opinions to a point. It was all blossom, of half a dozen kinds; each flower seemed craning its neck forward to get a chance of being looked at. There one had the reduction to vulgarity of the method; the modesty of nature was manifestly overstepped. Nature will give you in one sweep acres of red, of yellow, of blue—poppies, gillie-gowans, bluebells—but where she blends the kinds, in brake or on upland, flowers emerge against a background of green.

Perversely enough, along with this modern mania for diversified colour schemes runs a craze for singling out in masses that flower which is by nature most beautifully variegated. And here I can make no boast of Ireland's better judgment, for Irish gardeners also, if you let them, will separate their kinds of sweet-pea. This is one of the innovations for which the local flower-show has earned the abiding malison of every real flower-lover. Even roses are hardly so lovely a feature in the garden as its hedges of sweet pea, that begin in June and last till the frosts make an end of them. In the brilliancy and clearness of early summer that has scarcely ceased to be spring they are brighter, more aerial, more diaphanous than any other blossom; yet they so modify themselves, so delicately subdue their tints, that, without losing this aerial clearness, they can still come into harmony with the hot crimsons and

browns and golden yellows that are autumn's own. And, by a long development that has made them natural as the bluebell or the primrose, they have acquired a range of varied tints from white into pink and mauve, and so through carmine into the deepest maroon. This last deep hue—so characteristic of the butterflies which they beyond all other flowers resemble—is now being dropped out of cultivation; and it is of the very essence of their harmonies. It lends a richness and intensity to that lovely play of colour which can hold its own in any setting; the most beautiful hedge of it that I ever saw was in a Quakers' graveyard, where dark yews beyond green-mounded turf made a strange yet fitting background to this solemn brightness. To-day in England it is not once in ten times that you will find sweet peas grown blended; they must be sorted out, by their pinks and their scarlets, their whites and their mauves; and, for a final atrocity, your modern gardener has been taught to grow them in a high wire hoop, so that for six feet up is nothing but wire and green stalks, over which topples sadly down a mass of unrelieved blossom. Now if they be grown on hedge-stakes, they twine and intertwine among the branching twigs—things having in themselves a natural beauty of line—and the whole mass has blossom distributed over it. I thank a benign Providence that stakes are cheaper than wire hoops, and, therefore, we in Ireland still hold to the more primitive and more excellent way.

It may be that in all this I am only making virtues of our necessities, our prevailing lack of cash; yet

certainly Ireland is to me a country of beautiful gardens; and the best gardener I have known upheld on theory, as it were, a deliberate unpremeditation: "A garden neatly laid out on paper, accurately measured, thought out, and devised, may be all very well," she wrote, "for straight town slips, behind the houses that owe all their beauty to the hand of man; but for ground formed by Nature, and by her beautiful curving planes, trust only to the eye; and then even the most defective gardening will yield lovely corners and contrasts."

She herself—Charlotte Grace O'Brien—pushed very far this note of natural wildness, as well as that practice of free giving and taking which accords with it so well. "I have taken to growing roses from seed," she says, "and this year hope to see bloom on a dozen Rosa Rugosa seedlings, and in a year or two to have a great set-off of handsome briar roses." That blossoming she never saw; the essay from which I quote appeared (in "*Irish Gardening*") only a few days before her sudden death. And the happy jesting aspiration which followed these words may not come to fulfilment either, since the memory of her who uttered it is not likely to fade out of mind in that corner of earth which she described so lovingly: "I look at my inch-high seedlings and say to myself, I will have briar roses all over the whole place from the best seeds. I will have them growing in the midst of thorn and honeysuckle and furze; even as the wild briars grow, even so I will have them uplifting on their thorny arms the glory of the June summer. I will puzzle the botanists of another

generation, and when my bones are dust and my good spade rust, when my house is pulled down and my garden asphalt and bricks, my extra-special wild briars and my daffodils will still linger on the hill-side and scent the bloomy air for generations that know me not, nor mine."

Such gardens as hers may be matched all through Ireland ; but if I praise them more than the costlier and more guarded beauties which England affects, the balance needs to be redressed. Neither Ireland nor any other country that I have seen can approach those English cottage gardens, which, together with the plays of Shakespeare, are the most characteristic excellences that England has to show ; and it was surely in some such long-tended house-bordering close of flowers that Shakespeare learnt the garden wisdom which distinguishes him above all the poets of the world.

THE MYSTICAL BEAUTY.

ALL readers in Ireland, and a good many out of Ireland, know the work of "Æ" and the personality veiled behind these enigmatic vowels—the mystic, the painter, the poet, the economist, who preaches by turns esoteric theosophy and winter dairying, and, when he is not praising unearthly quietness in delicate verse, lampoons in pungent prose such persons as question the infallibility of Sir Horace Plunkett. Not a few also—for this is the most accessible of sages—know the genial unkempt presence, hazy with tobacco smoke, of this brown-bearded Northern Protestant. Everybody in Ireland who is not a Roman Catholic must submit to be classified as a Protestant (no matter how he may protest), and accordingly Mr. George Russell is known for a Protestant, along with Yeats, Synge, and other strange people. But one thing no one seems to know or to explain—why Mr. Russell should call himself "Æ"! Why must we mouth these inconvenient vocables in a bookshop or string them into the sentences of a review? However, without dwelling on a grievance, let us salute the collected poems of a real poet, who is also a real personality, developed in a country that is small enough to give men room to grow.

A notable fact about the work of "Æ," Yeats, and Synge, the three men who count for most in

the remarkable literary development of modern Ireland, is their complete originality and independence of each other. Yet, they have, somehow or other, jointly *fait école*, and of the three, “Æ’s” has been the strongest influence. It has been subtly felt, for few writers have had less of an obvious mannerism ; he has affected the essence and not the form of the imagination of his time. The whole body of his poetry is small, and what he has gathered out of three earlier volumes makes here, with some additions, only some two hundred and fifty pages ; but it has the stamp of permanence. Unhappily, the title, “Collected Poems,” suggests also finality. The poet has become increasingly a painter, and a painter whose skill never kept pace with his inspiration. Only in verse has he found the sure and accomplished touch which enables him, at his finest, to write as one of those who have overheard the music of the world :

“ Far up the dim twilight fluttered
Moth-wings of vapour and flame ;
The lights danced over the mountains,
Star after star they came.

“ The lights grew thicker unheeded,
For silent and still were we ;
Our hearts were drunk with a beauty
Our eyes could never see.”

That—in how different a kind—has the magic of Heine : a mood is caught in its wholeness, fitted once and for all to the beauty of sound in words which express it completely, and cease on a perfect close. When a man can write like that, we are bound to listen, even if we do not always understand what he

has to say, and for many of us that will be the case with this poet. None the less, one can try. The epilogue attached to this volume was, if I remember rightly, part of his first little book now some twenty years old, and in that space of time he has not relented towards poetry. The verdict which he anticipates from some musing "angel of the sun" is condemnation :

"Here was beauty all betrayed
From the freedom of her state ;
From her human uses stayed
On an idle rhyme to wait."

In short, the poet might, instead of writing verses, have "written on the book of life." Browning said something like that in lines too well known to need recalling; but Browning meant something different. We turn from the sculptor's Venus, the end of long slavery in Art's service, to "yonder girl who fords the burn"; but why? Because, when all is said, flesh and blood are better than marble. "Æ" has no traffic with flesh and blood; his quest is to escape from them into a region of more untrammelled life. The peasant lass may seem to him a creature of stuff far less perishable than any stone—but only if she be one of the initiate, like the girl in Connemara who, "with eyes all untroubled, laughs as she passes, bending beneath the creel with the seaweed brown," but whose true life begins only when the world is wrapped in dreaming night:

"Then will she wander, her heart all laughter,
Tracking the dream star that lights the purple gloom.
She follows the proud and golden races after,
As high as theirs her spirit, as high will be her doom."

She, if one comprehends rightly, has never let go or lost touch of an earlier and ampler life, from which she is now abased in the body of this humiliation ; yet she still has sight and hearing of those for whom “ this unresponsive earth beneath the feet ” was a living mother, and the sky “ a face of brooding love.”

So many people have told these things as truth that they must be true for some ; but for those who are not free of their mystery, this poet is more kindly when he is bound to common life. Here is an “ In Memoriam ” :

“ Poor little child, my pretty boy,
 Why did the hunter mark thee out?
 Wert thou betrayed by thine own joy,
 Singled through childhood’s merry shout?”

The pathos in that strikes deep, and somehow it touches that old fear wrought into all religions and grained in our very fibre, the dread of jealous lurking powers. The mood goes on in its musing :

“ Can that which towers from depth to height
 Melt in its mood majestical
 And laugh with thee as child to child?
 Or shall the gay light in thine eyes
 Drop stricken then before the piled
 Immutable immensities ?”

“ The obscure vale emits no sound,
 No sight, the chase has hurried far ;
 The Quarry and the phantom Hound,
 Where are they now? Beyond what star ?”

Here are accents of immortal ruth ; but it is not assuredly the traditional piety of Ireland ; nor is it

surprising to read the poet's defiant utterance. "On behalf of some Irishmen not followers of tradition"—his challenge to those who "call us aliens, we are told":

"The generations as they rise
May live the life men lived before,
Still hold the thought once held as wise,
Go in and out by the same door.

We leave the easy peace it brings :
The few we are shall still unite
In fealty to unseen Kings
Or unimaginable light.

We would no Irish sign efface,
But yet our lips would gladlier hail
The first born of the Coming Race
Than the last splendour of the Gael."

The Coming Race, when they begin to arrive, will have famous fighting times in Ireland; all the orthodoxies, representing, in the consecrated phrase, "all creeds and classes" and all political associations, will wage such war upon "the golden heresy of truth" (a fine phrase of Mr. Russell's) as the host of Maeve waged on Cuchulain. Heretics have as bad a name in Ireland as the Pope in Portadown; yet even the austere orthodoxy would be apt to recognise the grace of nature which breathes in these poems. The mystic is convinced that somewhere outside of narrow earth splendours await him, yet he is held back by a human tenderness. What earth has to teach "the proud and golden races" is, it would seem, compassion—those lessons of kindness and neighbourliness which are the likeliest for a pilgrim

spirit to learn in Ireland. Here is how the mystic puts it :—

“ Ere I storm with the tempest of power the thrones and dominions of old,

Ere the ancient enchantment allure me to roam through the star-misty skies,

I would go forth as one who has reaped well what harvest the earth may unfold ;

May my heart be o'erbrimmed with compassion, on my brow be the crown of the wise.

“ Not alone, not alone would I go to my rest in the heart of the love ;

Were I tranced in the innermost beauty, the flame of its tenderest breath,

I would still hear the cry of the fallen, recalling me back from above,

To go down to the side of the people who weep in the shadow of death.”

IN CIVILISED EUROPE.

A FRIEND, half French, half German, once said to me that, compared with France or Germany, England appeared only partially civilised. I am not sure that I care for civilisation, being used to Ireland, which my friend ranked as somewhere in a seventeenth century stage of development. But I know what she meant, and her judgment has often come back to me during some weeks of sojourn in this German university town.

Freiburg is an old city, but except for the Minster which dominates it, and a few houses and public buildings, it is all of modern construction. Its university, its vast theatre, its many churches, its wonderful equipment of hospitals and schools—all these are recent, and none of them possesses any architectural charm. Yet the whole effect of the town is full, not precisely of beauty, but of that amenity which is the distinctive quality of civilisation. Every turn of the road shows you that the people of Freiburg are "town proud," to use a word that I have heard in Northern England. Hardly a street is without its double line of trees; but, above all, these town-planners have used with admirable skill their finest natural advantage. From the Black Forest, about the foot of whose western-most spurs the town clusters, streams are easily led down, and swift runnels of water vivify and

freshen the streets with their sparkling ripples ; sometimes only a few inches wide, but generally with a stronger and broader flow ; and here and there, as, for instance, past the front of the university, is led a swirling six-foot race, weighty enough to drive the biggest mill, and, presumably, on its course it does drive one.

But the main part of this system of runnels has no purpose but amenity, and it must have cost a great deal to lay out, and a pretty penny to keep bright and in order. Whatever the cost, it is well justified —a more charming feature I never saw in any town ; and on hot days the rippling water makes an incomparable playfellow for the children. Healthier children, happier-looking children could not be found in the width of the world than you can watch sailing their paper boats on these rapids, or pitching in corks and sticks for a terrier to retrieve desperately before they vanish engulfed under the nearest grating ; or, again, where the channel slopes sharply, sliding barefoot down the slippery stones, half lifted off their feet by the rush of water.

Civilisation does not interfere with the children's play in public places. But it does ensure that in a town like this no such squalid spots can be found as disfigure even Oxford and Cambridge. It interferes, too, for the sake of amenity, with the butcher's trade ; his appetising array of disembowelled carcases must be kept within doors and behind glass ; and I cannot help thinking that such displays as London is accustomed to must infect the air and be infected by it. No doubt, this is an interference with the liberty both

of the butcher and of his customers, but civilisation does not allow you to do what may nauseate even a few of your neighbours.

On the other hand, civilisation, as practised here, confers upon each individual many privileges, and almost encumbers one with attentions. You want, for instance, to go for a walk up the Schlossberg which rises over the town, and from the town and from every point of access you find paths laid out for a civilised race which likes to do its hill-climbing comfortably—tracks so elaborately zig-zagged that an Irishman, used to seventeenth-century conditions, soon loses patience with the gradual ascent. Half-way up you will come, of course, to a restaurant, but also to a place once fortified, where elaborate inscriptions tell you the local history; and higher still a pavilion is open with a metal disc indicating the points of the compass towards which you must look to find towns within a radius of fifty miles; and beyond these, again, on an outer circle, are indicated the positions of London, Vienna, Paris, Petersburg, and so on. In short, everyone able to read can learn what in Great Britain might be told you by some person singularly well versed in local history and geography. Is it barbarism in me to think that a similar “orientation” table would vulgarise Arthur’s Seat, and that I should not care to see inscriptions set up which would summarise all the associations of Salisbury? On the whole, I convict myself of barbarism—some instinct of monopoly, surviving from the days when knowledge was not for every man.

Suppose, again, you push your walk further. Everywhere in the forest, everywhere in the plain, are roads or footpaths, and at every possible parting of the ways are notices indicating places and distances. I rebel, perhaps, against this ever watchful State, always at my elbow with the officially official information. Yet, go out of any big town or little town in England or in Ireland, and you will find yourself more often than not shut in between high walls; and the notices that you will see will indicate only penalties for trespassing. There is something, after all, to be said here for civilisation.

Something, too, strikes you when you look over the vast plain which stretches towards the Rhine and beyond the Rhine to the Vosges. Mountain spurs, rising vine-clad bluffs, like the Kaiser-Stuhl, run out into it like bastions. Great spaces of wood lie upon the vaster spaces of cultivated plain, irrigated grass, or corn land. But there are no petty enclosures. Not a wall, not a fence, breaks the fair expanse which spreads from you like a sea, and gives that sense of wide horizons which even in the most inland parts of England or of Ireland I have never felt. All the land is used; none of it goes to waste in untidy and ineffectual protection. Men must respect each other's landmarks very scrupulously in a state of civilisation. Their cattle cannot range freely, trampling as much as they eat; thrift and discipline keep them indoors or on a tether.

In all these matters the populations of the Rhine valley—French, German, Belgian, Dutch—all seem ahead of us islanders, and so they are again in the

capital affair of eating and drinking. The Germans surpass all other peoples in the way they serve their wine; it compares ill with the French grape, but in the lovely stemmed graceful glasses looks more attractive than anything that France or Italy offers to the passing guest. As for food, meat in Germany is dear, and is not good, but at least the German cook applies his mind (or her mind) to produce an appetising variety of dishes. Even fish, so hard for them to come by, they make palatable with careful sauces. Who in England would ever trouble to give you mayonnaise with cod? And yet it is excellent. Moreover, for them the vegetable world exists; but the dish which is theirs, par excellence, is what I was brought up to call French beans, but which are essentially German. They are cooked in half a dozen ways, some delicious, but the least good is a hundred times better than the green watery sop, tasteless and strengthless, which garnishes English tables at this time of year. These results are not achieved without labour; between meals I see the whole female strength of the establishment where I am staying occupied in an effort—always successful—to eliminate stringiness from the day's supply of *bohnen*.

Once more. Last June, during one of the sultry spells which visit London, a friend suggested dining in the country, and we ran down some twenty miles in his motor through cooler air to a well-known roadside inn, where were trees, a lake, and all that man needs for a pleasant meal in the open; yet we had to eat without appetite in a stuffy dining-room. Here in Freiburg at this friendly little hotel-pension

(Hohenzollern, if anyone cares to know) is a space of gravel with planes and fir trees along the front of the house; a score of small iron tables with the complement of iron chairs (twenty pounds would buy the lot), and a few electric lamps hitched into the trees make as pleasant and popular an open-air restaurant as you would wish for whenever the day comes fine. That, again, is civilisation. Civilisation is an affair of taking pains; it comes, I used to be told, from progressive desire. Is the desire for comfort stationary in Great Britain?

One more word—of gratitude. Twice in the last three years I have gone to Germany, each time to the bedside of one dear to me who had been struck down by sudden and dangerous illness; each time I found that even the veriest strangers had been prodigal of the most real kindness and helpfulness. *Gemütlich*, which is the adjective that South Germany appropriates to itself, means, in my experience, good-hearted as well as good-natured.

(And by what I wrote in 1912, I stand, now in this year of devastation, 1918).

AN EYE-WITNESS IN GERMANY.

IT is a curious and rather depressing experience to live for a considerable period in a town, becoming daily more familiar with the look and situation of its streets, the play of light and shade on its buildings, the changing yet constant stream of figures and faces passing by, until at last the sensation of strangeness has altogether departed, and yet all the while to be cut off from real intercourse with its inhabitants. Once before this happened to me, but that was in Morocco, where the bar of language is only the first among so many to be crossed that the enforced estrangement did not seem unnatural.

But here in Germany the case is very different. What the eye fastens on at every turn is the fundamental likeness of these people in appearance, in dress, in walk and gesture, to the citizens of any average English town. When they differ, it is only by some trait which reminds me of the hearty, simple, informal folk of Cork or Dublin. Even the ear helps out the impression; voice and intonation are very like to what one hears in Great Britain, still liker to what one hears in Ireland; and again and again, approaching a group of children at play, it has come on me with a shock of surprise that I did not understand what they were saying.

Not that I am specially attracted to the Germans. I fell in love, centuries ago, with France and the

French, and what a delight it was the other day to hear the running trill of a Frenchwoman's voice in some casual gathering! But these folk are homely to me, in all senses; they are like the Protestants of Southern Ireland or the Catholics of Ulster. Even the peasants, on whom naturally the racial and local stamp is strongest, remind me often of Donegal or Sligo.

Irishmen, for all the intensity of their local patriotism, stand less apart from the general life of Europe than the English. They are not so insular; success has not been theirs to engender an isolation of self-sufficiency; indeed, what success they have attained has come very often when they merged themselves into some Continental nation, or into that strange amalgam of all Europe which we call America. I could readily imagine an Irishman finding himself, after some years, more completely at home in Southern Germany than he would ever be in England. Of the converse process I had, as it chanced, an actual illustration; for in a shop here, where I was outraging all decencies of the German grammar, another casual customer greeted me with surprise, speaking himself a very odd English. But he was a constituent of mine, all the way from Galway!—one of those clockmakers whose trade is hereditary in the Black Forest, and who are established certainly over all Ireland, and probably over all the United Kingdom. My friend, who had come back to his native land for some family business, sits on the Galway Town Council, and confesses himself far more at home there than in this pros-

perous and well-appointed Freiburg. Yet a more typical specimen of the decent, intelligent South German burgher does not walk these streets.

So, in many ways it has been impressed on me, studying Germany through that sense which is exempt from the curse of Babel, that among the blended races which people Northern Europe points of resemblance are far more real and more important than divergences. There is a real European division which coincides more or less closely with the limits of olive-growing: *homo Mediterraneus* is other than *homo Europaeus*, as one perceives, for instance, in the results of a common imitation. Germans try to dress like Englishmen, and they succeed; the Frenchman tries it, and produces something as distinctively French as the blouse and sabots. *Homo Mediterraneus* (for in France the southern breed predominates) does not look like *homo Europaeus*, do what you will with him. As for the German ladies, they presumably try to dress like Frenchwomen; but they achieve, in varying degrees, English results. Nearly all look as if they had come out of an English or an Irish rectory. The sea is a great divider; but for all that the people of Freiburg have far more affinity with Cork or with Cheltenham than they have with Tours.

Yet, how gradual the transition must be in the basin of the Rhine, where soil, climate, and occupations are all common to the two peoples. The language frontier is well marked, though; here, no further from the Vosges than an active man could walk in a single day, very few even of the educated

class have any mastery of French. In the big shops there will be one assistant specially qualified; in the small ones you speak German or nothing. For my own part, I bless these barriers, guardians of the national type; but it is well to be reminded also of the common element which lies still deeper. There is no use in saying, as many wiseacres do, that Germany is prosperous because it is German, and Ireland backward because it is Catholic. Here, in Germany, I see people very like our Irish folk—easy, good-natured, and in bulk Catholic. Does that sentence them to permanent economic inferiority?

Here, again, is a University, fully accepted and recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, observing Catholic holidays. Its reputation stands deservedly high, and its students, Protestant and Catholic, would be furious at any suggestion that perfect freedom of teaching does not exist within its halls. Why should things work out otherwise in Ireland? The only man from whom I have heard a grumble was a fencing master, whose school I visited, and he complained that the Catholic Church was so severe in its discouragement of duelling that few students now came for lessons. His grievance would move me more if I had not ascertained that the student's duel is an ordeal rather than a fight, a test of endurance rather than of skill. Imagine boxing with the condition that you must not step back or move your head: there is the students' duel, except that instead of blackening eyes you gash cheeks and noses. This is the sole ecclesiastical usurpation that I know of; but here, of course, I have not been able to investi-

gate. My eyes can testify only that in Germany Roman Catholicism is certainly not incompatible with material progress nor with scientific culture.

Again, are these people who pass me by really the enemies of England? Their tailors advertise an English cut; well, perhaps even when all London was agog about Fashoda and the policy of pin pricks, Paris fashions did not go out of demand. But, at all events, the individual English-speaking man meets nothing but courtesy and kind looks. There was a time, not so long ago, when to speak English in Germany meant the risk of insult; but of all that now, no trace. I could never deny that there is in England a feeling against Germans, springing from the fear of being under-sold, or over-matched in personal efficiency. It is not a noble emotion, and here it has no counterpart, for the provoking cause is absent. I do not believe that in the true sense of the word any racial or international ill will exists.

But unquestionably there is here, as with us, a theoretical, a doctrinaire enmity. A very well-informed and friendly young German, English-speaking, who reminds me a good deal of some of the younger Tory M.P.'s, said that he had rejoiced when King's Edward's death delivered Germany from a powerful and relentless enemy. Lord Roberts, too, haunts his dreams. We have gentlemen not less clear-sighted and well-informed; I wonder if they are not equally fantastic in their estimate of the authority and of the malevolence which they attribute to influential persons in Germany!

(And now, in 1918, I wonder which set of them

was right—or whether both of them were wrong—and the world sent for a period to hell for the sake of a misunderstanding).

At least, one thing is borne in on me here, where I sit above the town and look west over the plain—when one cannot talk, one falls back on thinking—and I see in my mind's eye hosts marching on the Trouée des Vosges, driving the French pell-mell, capturing vast armies, starving Paris into submission, and coming back with five milliards of indemnity in solid cash. How many times over have those milliards been spent in "preparation" against the revanche! If to-morrow we had sunk or captured every German Dreadnought, the Naval Estimates would increase, as the German military preparations have increased ever since 1871. That is an aspect of the facts which clear-sighted and unsentimental gentlemen omit to take into account. Not in that way is relief to be sought from the burden of armaments.

(And by that also I stand, now in 1918).

THE PROCESSION OF THE PLUMS.

THE old farm on Cotswold, which an artist had remodelled for his dwellinghouse, looked south-east across a steep and sunny valley. On the irregular undulating patch of lawn grew a tall pear tree, graceful as a woman, and an apple tree with spreading boughs. The house itself had been re-roofed with deep thatch, and the mullioned stone windows were set among the branches of healthy fruit trees well trained. A vine straggled over one front, and clematis was matted thick above the wide porch ; the whole place was terraced up and fenced about with the drystone walls which Cotswold folk have the art of building. Flowers were in profusion, no rarities, but roses, white pinks, blue larkspur, love in a mist, and mats of creeping veronica and aubretia. Its distinction was the profusion of odours ; every English plant that smells, mint, old man, rosemary, sweet briar everywhere ; and when you went to enter between stone walls, over which looked out climbing roses and the tall spiky heads of artichoke, the door, in swinging, struck a bush of thyme, and saluted you with fragrance. The whole exquisite place was just a little too complete to be real ; it was the country, but the country perfected almost to sophistication. From this reproach the orchard redeemed it. Whoever lived there must do many an honest day's work if the crop of apples was

to be harvested and renewed ; and for one at least of the company of friends to whom the tenancy was offered, this made a deciding factor. To have once had the care of fruit trees breeds a longing to have it once again. But we never gave a thought at the moment to the fact that the orchard had as many plum trees as apples, and that plums are a troublesome crop to dispose of, three miles away from a country station in Gloucestershire.

What was more, when July came in on us installed there, it was evident that we had fallen upon such a year for plums as few remembered. The lady who presided over our company laid plans for bottling them ; then came the war, and with it came public exhortations to all the world against letting any food supply perish. Fruit-bottling and jam-making were specially enjoined as a patriotic duty. By the time our apparatus arrived, the first plums were already beginning to drop from the tree ; to our unacquainted eyes it seemed a grave matter that they should be lying there in dozens. We fell to work.

These were the little black harvest plums, very pretty to look at ; and there were five trees of them. The more we gathered, the more they seemed to fall : and we were new and unhandy with the bottling apparatus : we grew hot, we grew flurried, and we began to count the trees in the garden. There were twenty plum trees, and the five with which we strove to cope had already filled to overflowing every basket ; we heaped up a bath with plums, and they squashed each other ; wet weather set in and added difficulties ; we were like a sea-bordering folk before whose door

the casual play of nature flings down cartloads of herring, in heartbreaking prodigality. Still we struggled on, and presently order began to emerge; then came a day when a neighbour sent for plums, and we could not scrape together more than a stone weight or so. The next set of trees had not come ripe, and we began to realise that, although plums could not be stored like apples, the prudent planter of an orchard had arranged for a graduated succession of the crop. From that time out it was a pleasure to watch them defile past, tree following tree in sequence, a veritable procession of plums. There was leisure now to study and admire the harvest. Also, means of disposing of it opened up; transport problems proved soluble; and, moreover, Providence produced a neighbour who wanted to bottle fruit and had no plums. Parts of the crop, no doubt, defeated us; there were seven trees of a medium-sized dark plum, probably that which furnishes the *pruneaux de Tours*, and for a fortnight we wrestled with them. They used to split always when they fell, and split often even on the tree, which unfitted them for bottling; and their number was like the number of locusts. The lawn became littered with their débris, till it crawled with wasps and flies; later, it was some consolation that the red admirals which had wholly devoted themselves to the greengage tree in our potato patch used now to come and flit and poise and spread glorious wings for our delight in the rare moments when we had time to sit in deck-chairs on our one space of mown grass. But as often as we sat down something would surely tempt us

into the orchard ; perhaps to gather windfallen apples, perhaps to shift the tether of the two goats which had been purchased to keep down the grass. These were creatures coloured like a fallow deer, and ought, it seems, to have had no horns, but, because they had them, came within our means. The little nannygoat, which would follow me across country like a dog, refused all other fruit, but condescended to eat plums ; she shared the prevailing passion, and it was easily gratified. For constantly, when we had strayed in like this, tired with the labour of picking or handling the big crop, we would perceive that some little out-lying tree, of only two or three years' planting, had ripened unobserved, and someone would go back for baskets to pick and gather and make a clean end of it. Such was the little tree of mirabelles, so low that one could reach almost to the top of its branches ; we found the long, harsh, dry grass about its roots all littered with amber fruit, warm in the sun, and, for some reason, not touched by slug or ant ; and the lovely laden boughs dropped their burden so quickly that one had to be very careful in gathering. Another day it was a beautiful purple plum, on the high slope that ended the orchard, just an easy half-hour's work to gather to the last plum upon it, and go in with the makings of perhaps half a bottling. But with the damsons it was a very different story : they had to be picked one by one, many thousands of them, off tall, thorny trees, which jagged and tore like the sloes they are first cousin to ; and it was an education in itself to learn on how slender boughs a high ladder might be propped, and yet carry a heavy man with

safety. But what exquisite fruit the damsons were when one had them! so clean and firm, so rich in their sombre beauty—the darkest plum colour that is not absolutely black.

Last of the whole procession came the yellow bul-laces, planted, perhaps designedly, to the north of a great walnut, so that the sun was slow in reaching them; it seemed impossible they should ever ripen, and the first to come were abortive and exuded resin. But later we found the soil strewn with long yellowish fruit, like the cleanest new potatoes, and these also the slugs had neglected. As one went on hands and knees to gather them, the whole air was filled with a strange heavy and heady aroma, rather cloying; no other plum in the orchard had any scent perceptible out of doors. These also we harvested, shaking them down in a regular fusilade; there must have been at least half a hundred-weight on that tree, and, before we had finished with them, the yellow cooking apples, their neighbours, were clamouring to be picked and saved from bruising themselves in a fall. The procession had taken six full weeks to go by us, and we had not made default at any point of it. What fraction of a ton we saved, either through our own labour or that of our friends, for human use, in that first winter of war, we never exactly computed, but it was a considerable one, and perhaps we did patriotically by turning our place of holiday into a fruit-bottling store and a jam factory. This only is sure: that it was a joyful thing, after long disuse, to be in living touch with earth and the

fruits of earth, harvesters and gleaners in our way; near the blessed exhalations of kindly soil, taking our part, if only for play, in the world's fundamental business. Another year we should have known our work better, we should have known our trees, the order of their incoming, the chances of their crop; and when I wrote this essay, we were counting over those chances. But no other autumn will bring together those fruit-gatherers. She who was the chief director of this happy industry was also the first of us to go on active service and the first to die. It is good to know and remember that, in her brief tenure of that lovely dwelling, she met such prodigality of nature and was for radiant weeks haunted in her dreams by the soft thud of ripe fruit falling.

A COLONEL OF THE IRISH BRIGADE.

I LEFT Fermoy in September, 1915, with one of our Irish brigades. A year later, almost to the very day, chance brought me to Fermoy again, and there at the station were posters of a great English paper saying, "Bravo, the Irish Brigade."

On that day, when the word to advance was given, our battalion of the Connaught Rangers were where they had earned the right to be, in the foremost line; and the man who gave the word was the man who had made them what they were—worthy inheritors of a famous name. First out of the trench, and waving them on, Colonel John Lenox Conyngham saw them launched, and he saw no more; a bullet took him in the forehead. I do not know what finer thing could have been desired for him. His work was accomplished. The battalion he had trained led the rush which swept through Guillemont that day, capturing the redoubtable stronghold of the quarries.

He was never in doubt as to how they would acquitted themselves. To us officers he said things in private which would sound a little arrogant if I quoted them—and yet they have been made good. Even from the last day that I was with him in the regiment, somewhere at the end of May 1916, there comes up to me the look of him and the sound of his voice, as he inspected the companies just out of

the trenches. I was apologising for some lack of smartness. "Yes, of course," he said. "Turn them out again when they have had dinner. But, after all, don't the men themselves look splendid after eighteen days of it?" The men—the men—it was always the men with him; it had to be, with us also. That was at the root of the process, by which a first-rate professional soldier taught willing amateurs how to train troops.

It was the more difficult in our case, because three or four of us junior officers were within a few years of his own time of life—he was fifty-five—and would in ordinary circumstances have met him on entire equality. I was nearest to him in age, yet I was never in my life so much in awe of any man; I never valued praise so much from any, and was never so unresentful under reproof. Reproof was never spared if there was negligence; but no professional was never more tolerant of the amateur or more appreciated his difficulties.

"I am asking men with six months' experience to take complete charge of a company, when in the regular army they would not have been allowed to handle it for ten minutes on parade." That, in effect, he said to me over and over again. Want of knowledge, want of skill, were readily excused, but want of thoroughness, neglect of orders, above all, lack of consideration for the men, met with no mercy; and he had the talent for chastisement. Nothing could be less like the peppery Colonel of tradition than his icy dignity.

Of course, there could be explosions with him, but

their rarity made them appalling. Once, I remember, we were practising a ceremonial parade past him when suddenly he set his horse to the gallop, and rode straight at one of the advancing companies, almost trampling down a man whom his eye had detected chewing tobacco and spitting. Words came then in a torrent of passion, but in a moment he was back to normal. "We have to begin the whole thing again," he said, "and all for one man. The rest were very good."

But this was wholly exceptional; rebuke meant little more than contact with that grave and menacing presence. Once a defaulter who came out white and shaking from the orderly room was questioned. "An' what did he say to you?" The lad stammered, hesitated, and then found words. "Oh, Jasus! when he looks up at you from behind them glasses!" That was all. The punishment was far less than the manner of inflicting it. Yet, with the men he never used sarcasm; that weapon was kept for us.

Almost my first experience of our company was returning from a very unsuccessful night operation, cold and dripping, to be confronted by the announcement that we must see the men provided with cocoa before we showed ourselves in the mess. While we stood in rather a grumbling group outside the mess-room door, a voice, charged with contempt, reached us through darkness: "I should have thought the cookhouse was the proper place to see if the cocoa was being got ready," and away we went towards the cookhouse with our tails between our legs. But my heart rejoiced, for I was just out of the ranks, and

I knew this was the way things ought to be done, and were not always done. I do not remember any collective reprimand or disapproval; but I remember many days in France when the company commanders were brought together because some compliment had been paid to him, and he could not be content till, with a frank generosity, he had passed it on to his officers. "It is you who have done it," he said. He was right, too. We did the work, and no men were ever less interfered with; but we did it as we had been taught to do it, and because we were kept up to it at every point.

There was another side of him that came out, though sparingly, amid the comradeship of our mess—a rare quality of charm. I found it myself most in his occasional talk of men and things—above all, of Ireland. I have known no better Irishman than this son of an Ulster house, whose kindred were deep in the Ulster Covenant. I left the regiment with his full sympathy and assent to try and help in some settlement at home, and when that settlement failed, no one, I think, regretted it more than he. But the mess in general, and the subalterns in particular, valued most those convivial moments over a card-table which showed us glimpses of an infectious gaiety that belonged to less responsible days.

Of all the mourners at his burial, there can have been none so deep in grief as the veterans of the old army, for none else knew him so well. When they came out to us in drafts from home, there was none of them he did not know and welcome. "Yes, sir, I saw the Colonel," said one of these old warriors to

me when he joined my company, "and glad I was to see him, for I'm twenty years in the army, and I know there is few like him." More than once after that I saw little conferences between this sort of Mulvaney and my commanding officer, and from one the Colonel came over to me smiling. "I'm pleased with myself," he said. "C—— has just said to me, 'I'm beginning to like this battalion of yours better.' "

For his outward appearance, if words can give the impression of something extraordinarily tall, thin and upright, yet without stiffness and with an easy poise, that was he. Always point-device, he seemed to have been born in uniform. Horseback became him, but I remember him best on foot, and for his most characteristic movement I recall the grave dignity of his salute as he rendered it to some General-Officer. For the regiment, what had most vitality was his voice; it carried like a trumpet, and had beauty as well as power. I should not be surprised if, through the din of that fierce hour, the battalion heard him all down the assembly trench, when he raised it for the last time to launch the charge on Guillemont.

MASS ON THE HILLSIDE.

AT church time on Christmas morning, 1916, I looked from a grassy field across a stretch of sunken road leading straight uphill by a gradual slope to the East. Opposite was another field, bounded by tall elm trees, whose branches strained and creaked in the gale. They grew on the edge of a five-foot bank formed by the road, and between their trunks one saw, some hundred yards off, a good-sized homestead well provided with farm buildings. It was such a landscape as might have been matched in a hundred Irish parishes; and the gusty, rainy, westerly weather was homelike, too.

But upon this ground plan, so to say, there were etched some salient details which, so far, are continental only—with others which, though Irish enough, God knows, were yet very strange to Ireland. Irish were the close-ranked men who stood in the roadway: Irish those of my own company drawn up in a half circle behind me on the grass; but Ireland has never seen them in that array, mud-stained, thigh-booted, with rifles slung, gas-respirators in position, and equipment on, ready for action at an instant's notice.

Upon the trees many branches were strangely tattered and broken; the top of one tall stem hung head down, half lopped by some fierce stroke, forty feet from the ground; and the farmhouse, though

part looked comfortable and solid, for the rest of its length showed a skeleton of rafters against the sky. And the skyline of the slope, five hundred yards off, was saw-edged and jagged with what a field-glass would have shown to be heaped up sandbags and barbed wire.

Nearer at hand, the bank facing us was adorned with the military architecture of the moment; tunnelled into, riveted and shored up with great walls of yellowish sandbags—an architecture designed for the modest purpose of avoiding sight. To that end comfort and even decency must attorn; men lie thick in these shelters, worst housed of animals.

It needs some notable occasion to bring out these cave dwellers from huddling in the dark, and to keep them standing massed in the open—such a mark as gunners hardly dream of, only a few furlongs behind the line.

And surely it was no common event. In the low doorway of one of the large dug-outs, the first-aid station, a table was set, spread with a white cloth, and by it stood a white-haired man in white robes—the priest ministering. Facing him were the two companies, equipped at all points save one; they stood bare-headed; their steel helmets lay on the ground beside them, or dangled from their hands. Most were reading in the little book of devotion which nearly every Irish soldier carries, for in that gale the priest's voice was inaudible; the only sound was now and then the silver tinkle of a bell which marks the Mass's high periods. Every man there must have guessed—and most, for most had seen

a year's service, knew well—what risk we were taking; but when the Communion began, it seemed as though the whole assembly desired to press to that table so strangely set. Indeed, so far back was it within the narrow mouth of the dug-out that the priest came out on to the footboards and administered to the men as they passed, not kneeling but standing to receive the consecrated element.

We should have been kept much longer but that his provision became exhausted ; and, frankly, a weight was lifted from me, for I was senior of those present at the moment. Towards the end of the service one shell dropped on the road above us, well away, nearly two hundred yards off. But shells seldom come single, and the German habit was frequently to drop them down a road at intervals, say, of fifty to eighty yards. As we stood, one burst might have caused us twenty casualties, and I almost gave the order to move off, but decided that a second shot must come over before I did so. Still, it was an ugly responsibility. The priest must have felt it, too, but he never quickened his utterance. White-haired as he was, and even portly, he wore the Military Cross ; and officers who saw him mount the parapet with the advance from Guillemont have said that his presence and example would have justified a greater reward. Far too brave for recklessness, his grey courage would never have consented to such a ceremony had not time and place been carefully considered, as, of course, they were : we were screened from observation, and the gale kept aeroplanes down. But he also, like those in direct

authority, had deemed that such risk as there must be was richly worth the taking.

For, after all, it is in unison with the tradition of these Irish regiments. Their priests come where no other clergy come, because of the supreme importance which the rites of their religion hold in their lives and deaths. Catholic or non-Catholic, no man who assisted at that Mass on the hillside is likely to forget it. I do not say for all, but for many, it was the best indulgence, the truest comfort, which could be given to them, the one home-like thing in their Christmas day. And as we stood there among the offal of war, with refuse and rubbish such as camps accumulate making the scene unlovely, with that sandbagged hovel to replace the church, and a few rickety crosses of lath in a corner close by showing a sinister parody of the decent churchyards at home—there was yet brought near to us something of ancient beauty, a mystery solemn as the starlit skies over muddy trenches, yet not like them, ironic and remote. Modern war is so sordid, so ugly, so slavish, so depressing, that to quicken imagination even for an instant is the best kindness you can do to troops; and many a poor Irish lad in those two companies must have felt, over and above the high stimulus to his devotion, a fine touch of adventure and the magic of true romance.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

PEOPLE in these island countries know the war only by report. Now and then, it is true, some stray incursion from the air or from the sea brings a spatter of death to their doors. But that is not the war.

The war is a vast, hideous, devastating tide kept back by dykes and barriers whose mainstay is the bodies of men. Far back from the line, no doubt, the sense of this is not so urgent; yet every household in France knows in its bones with what appalling rapidity the deluge can sweep forward if the dyke goes.

One has always thought of France as a woman, but in these last two winters the image has become far more definite to me. France is the woman of the house; at her fireside, in her farmyard, with ceaseless activity filling in her time while she waits; full of care, yet with no trace of anxiety, helpful, indomitable, ready for all events; a figure of such dignity as the world cannot surpass.

Those people that I have known in France during the war were chiefly the poorer folk, in miners' cottages, in little shops, and in farms. Yet when one met the richer and more delicately nurtured, the difference was only of more finish, more charm, more suppleness in the stuff; the same essential quality was there, of tense yet quiet strength. Rightly

or wrongly, her women to me, far more than her soldiers, are France. France is in the homesteads, between the old men and the children, watching with grave eyes for the final issue. For us here it is great news to read the line moving forward, of advantage gained, but it means far more to France. For them, as for us, there has always been the waiting for news of men in the battle; but we have not felt as they have felt that other and more terrible anxiety—the fear with every bombardment lest the barrier might be burst. And, over and above that, along nearly four hundred miles of front, France, in the shell-swept area behind the trenches, has sat watching young children play under the shadow of death.

One memory, if I could only convey it, would help people here to realise what the strain is and how women have borne it—to realise also how vast a change may be made in many lives by what seems an almost inappreciable advance.

The place was a mining village, some few rows of cottages beside a mountainous slag-heap; and the cottages facing eastward looked towards one of the most bitterly contested battlefields of this war. Some of the rows had been completely broken to pieces by shell-fire, and all were in course of demolition. But the shelling was not a daily occurrence; it came spasmodically; for a week, perhaps even for a fortnight, the inhabitants could breathe freely; yet nerves were always on the rack. The cottage in which I slept had escaped so far, though its windows were largely broken by concussion. The two rooms

of its upper story were given over to officers ; the woman of the house and her three children existed, almost on sufferance, on the ground floor and in the cellar of her little home. She had left it once early in the war when the Germans made their way into a part of the village, but she had returned as soon as the tide had been pushed by hard fighting some few furlongs back.

The husband was dead, killed in some early battle ; the children remained—her whole life. One of them could scarcely endure to be out of reach of her hand, and though she rebuked, it was easy to see that this over-fondness was, perhaps, her only luxury. The house was trampled at all hours by men ; orderlies slept on her kitchen floor ; officers used to sit and write at one of the little tables by the window. All that was left her—all we could leave—was her seat by the fire and the end of the table where her sewing was kept.

We came in there, mud from head to foot ; our boots and coats, the men's boots and coats, trailed mud over everything, and she apologised to me because she could not keep the house as she would wish. We were in great hardship, and, for that matter, in danger ; we had scarcely come to the village when a fierce attack developed ; our people blew up three mines ; the Germans retaliated. We were stood to arms at midnight and dragged our way into the trenches in the dark, brushing her and her children aside on our passage. Yet when we came back she had a welcome for us, more by demeanour than by words. Everything that she

could do was done, and, above all, whatever inconvenience she suffered, there was no word of complaint; nothing that we asked she refused, and she offered much we did not ask for.

She said no word of fear; yet, she said, it was hard to keep the children indoors when shells were falling. She did not blame us for helping to start an attack, but she said, whenever there was activity, shelling recommenced—as it did while we were there. A second time during our stay there we were stood to arms after dark, and while I was giving orders and buckling myself into my equipment, and coming and going to make sure that all was ready for a move into the line, I was aware of her and another woman standing there in all the bustle, silent for the most part, yet now and then muttering to each other, almost under their breath, “*Maudite guerre! Maudite guerre!*”

We were strangers to them, yet never have I felt about me more sense of woman’s present sympathy; never have I seen more genuine care. There was no parade, no demonstration, not a word said to convey their compassion—and scarcely a word either when, an hour later, the very welcome news came that we were not needed that snowy night. We were glad enough, God knows, yet not more glad than they looked.

Perhaps because there and then only women stood by us on the very brink of danger, that little household, so poor, yet of such dignity, has come to embody for me the very soul of France. I realise so well what it means to that woman to live week

after week scarcely more than a rifle shot from the enemy, and to know that every day which passes without sudden, mangling death for one of her children—without, for that matter, destruction of house and household in one stroke—is a day of escape. Yet even in her own personal hourly mother's apprehension she had not lost the larger sympathy. She had seen so many go from her doors, she said once, and so many not return. All of us, French or foreign, came within her compassion, and the least we can do is to give it back. Since that day the line has not shifted; now it is on the very fringe of a great offensive, and there also France may see the tide turn.

Yet in the very effort to pen it back, she and hers may be blotted out; or they may have perished long ago, or been driven out, poor flotsam, to wander with the other homeless ones in search of such shelter as other needy folk can give. But if she is there with her children, and if one day there also the change comes, and security reigns where all things were precarious, who can count the measure of that deliverance? Every yard that is gained along all that interminable line has far more than its military value: it is a yard more between some courageous woman's household and the daily terror of death.

It is more than that: it is a first symptom of the tide turning, it is an ebb from which our generation at least will never see that tide reflow.

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